

Hegel's Theology or Revelation Thematised

By

Stephen Theron

Hegel's Theology or Revelation Thematised

Hegel's Theology or Revelation Thematised

By

Stephen Theron

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing



Hegel's Theology or Revelation Thematised

By Stephen Theron

This book first published 2018

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2018 by Stephen Theron

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-5275-0592-8

ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-0592-6

CONTENTS

Preface: Hegel's Theology	vii
---------------------------------	-----

A: Historical

Chapter One.....	2
Predication and Speculative Re-Writing: Aristotle to Hegel	

Chapter Two	9
Aristotle, Aquinas, Hegel	

Chapter Three	12
Intentional Species, Phenomenal Reality: Aquinas, Hegel	

Chapter Four	21
Hegel and Kant's Third Critique	

Chapter Five	29
Unbounded Philosophy and its Detractors	

Chapter Six	41
Hegel: With What Must Science Begin? A Commentary	

B: Theological

Chapter Seven.....	78
Thematising Revelation	

Chapter Eight.....	144
The Heart of the Matter: The Matter of the Heart	

Chapter Nine.....	149
Hegel's Theology	

Chapter Ten	154
Priestesses, Priests, Sacrifice, Religion and the Christian Movement	

Chapter Eleven	172
Creation, Theology, Idealism	
Chapter Twelve	179
Good and Evil	
Chapter Thirteen	184
Hegel's Theology	
C: Philosophical	
Chapter Fourteen	188
Nietzsche on Good and Evil	
Chapter Fifteen	191
No Ethical Theory in Hegel?	
Chapter Sixteen	202
Interior Souls	
Chapter Seventeen	210
Absolute Idealism, Universal of Universals, Self-Consciousness, Death	
Chapter Eighteen	230
Freedom and Necessity in Absolute Mind	
Chapter Nineteen	234
God, Idea, Process	
Chapter Twenty	255
Master and Slave	
Chapter Twenty One	265
Spirit, Reason, God	

PROLOGUE: HEGEL'S THEOLOGY

Some say one should speak of Hegel's philosophy of religion rather than of his theology. After all, he gave a set of lectures, repeatedly, with that title. But I believe that was an institutional concession. His own thought suggests a different outlook, a more unitary conclusion. Theology, we know, was one of Aristotle's names, though reached at the end of his investigations, for what he otherwise called "first philosophy", that of being *qua* being, namely (his phrase), all else, logic, nature, ethics, being secondary to this. Hegel echoes this view of things when he says that philosophy is concerned with "religion and nothing but religion"; and yet we know it is concerned with being, with thought as a whole. Being is thought, thinking, Hegel concludes. But then religion is no longer religion inasmuch as this would name, mark, a special department of study or contemplation.

The inexhaustible wealth of everything in the universe is contained and understood in the religious standpoint, and this standpoint itself has the sense that it is the absolute truth of this wealth, that the latter as it is in and for itself exists only from this standpoint, and that all other modes of its existence are past, external, ephemeral, untrue, miserable, self-contradictory, self-destructive. As a result, spirit is unable to remain or sustain itself at any of these stages. Its true satisfaction is that it exists in this expression for the sake of its satisfaction, its subjective position. The presupposition is that spirit is the truth. The assertion that the religious standpoint is the truth of the world contains on the objective side the true, which has being-in-and-for-itself, and which we call God; and on the subjective side, the fact that religiousness is the true actuality of self-consciousness (its true life, its experienced, conscious truth). The objective proof, the objective necessity of the religious standpoint consists therefore in the cognition of truth. This cognition is not such that we presuppose a concept of God and religion, (A) the correctness of which we would have to demonstrate, and (B) then seek the subjective cognitive grounds for this content, cognitive grounds without which we would not be convinced. Primarily, therefore, it is not a question of proving some such propositions as: "God is thus and so", "Religion is this and that". Such propositions contain as a presupposition the representational images "God", "religion".

It is a question of the necessity of the content in and for itself, or of discovering in the cognition what it is that is the true. The only presupposition that we need to make is that we do not wish to halt and remain in any subjective standpoint other than what we discover corresponding to its concept.¹

This last, though, is none other than the presupposition of philosophy. Hegel is concerned here, context shows, with religion as Christianity, which he calls, accordingly, the absolute religion. Yet by his own schema anything absolute is, in terms of its own perfection, philosophy as subsuming, though without destroying, both religion and art. It would follow that for his own thought there is no presumption that Christianity is either a religion or even “religion itself”, in Henri de Lubac’s phrase². Theology, as in Aristotle, will be the science of the ultimate as such, identified by Aristotle as being *qua* being. To this identification Hegel answers both yes and no, but without contradiction. Being, namely, is itself the Idea as the Idea is being. To understand this is to have worked through Hegel’s system of logic in one’s mind. This system, however, as distinct from the mere Hegelian text, material leavings of a dead man, of a man dead to this world and to all appearances (phenomena), is not only Hegel’s, since it is the system and method which is mind itself. This is his own claim, as it was Aristotle’s of his own metaphysics. At the same time Hegel was not so foolish as to imagine that his text, through which we know mind in this way, would stand forever as mind’s unique representation, in real contradiction of that account of phenomena, of categories, as moments of the Idea, which we have just touched upon. There is a paradox here, paradox being what we encounter on a first look at things, a seeming contradiction to be overturned, namely. The solution lies in the simple realisation that to speak, to write something down, is to enter, to be thus far part of, the phenomenal world, which, as finite, Hegel declares, is purely ideal. That is, it has no being or existence outside of or as not being but a moment of absolute mind, with which, however, each such moment is, by the nature of the absolute as infinite, identical in its difference.

¹ Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. I. Cf. p.222.

² See Henri de Lubac’s *The Drama of Atheistic Humanism*, Meridian Books: New York 1963. See also his *Catholicism*, Burns & Oates, London 1950 (French original, 1937). A 65 page Appendix to the latter, classic work contains fifty-five Patristic extracts on the topic of the believing community or communion, of which each member is also the whole, it is claimed, as containing it.

This is to say that it is Spirit itself, the Idea itself, which thus flows and hence is free, is freedom, precisely as absolute, whereas being is as such determinate. In the older terminology the same thing was said by postulating being as itself “analogueing”. Being, that is, “is said in many ways”, wrote Aristotle, adding that there is no class or genus of “the things that are”. As Hegel will put it, being is no mere finite universal but, rather, in what could surely itself be called analogous speech, the universal of universals and, further, as such identical with the subject, with subjectivity as named by the first personal pronoun *in its singular form*, as must be added with emphasis. This, I do not doubt, is Hegel's version of the Johannine “In the beginning was the word”. Word, after all, is what flows between mind and mind, humanly speaking, and hence is never still. Word just is movement and this is why, Hegel claims, speech is fundamental to writing as hearing is superior to sight. In the identification of word with the beginning, therefore, the concept of spirit, which Hegel disentangles, was reached, though surely, even so, by no means for the first time. “The spirit of God moved upon the waters”, we read on the Bible's first page, and prolonged acquaintance with Hegel's writing has convinced me that we have in his philosophy a continuation, in a form suited to our age, of the Patristic commentary on such Scripture, not so much as an authoritative text, though appeal to it in this way is by no means foreign to Hegel, as many examples from his writings can testify, as rather a fount of wisdom. Implied, though, is that Scripture can only come to be recognised as such where it is first imbibed in the obedience of faith or religion. “Religion must come first”: for the individual as for society. There is an analogy here with Aristotle's remark upon ethics as a science, that knowledge of it cannot even begin for one not “well brought up”. The view can cause despair and is indeed part of that finitude Hegel finds in Aristotle as belonging to his being cast in history as a pagan Greek, lacking the conception of a universal humanity. Anyone, we now would rather say, can supplement and correct his upbringing and should indeed do so, since we are all responsible for the opinions we hold. To say that, however, is in no way to give an opening for judging either another person or oneself. “Judge not”. This is a command, a counsel, which in Hegel is underpinned by the apparently but not essentially self-contradictory maxim that “All judgments are false”. Thus also our above assertion is too simple if it is not added that upbringing must always leave its mark as, even genetically, pre-determinative, in a measure at least, and so it will be in religion also. We do not and cannot read the Gospels as contemporaries read them and should not, therefore, wish to do so. This was Bultmann's

point, as Hegel also counsels against confusing beginnings, in a manner "soulless", with the Concept.

Hegel's notion of spirit is thus equivalent to the Pauline view of the absolute, of God, as "all in all", with the difference that Paul writes, exoterically, for an audience immersed in phenomena, in "realist" thinking, whatever was his own mind on that. He thus has to posit this God, this absolute, the Idea (of being "all in all"), as future, which Hegel declares to be impossible or indeed self-contradictory, although typical of specifically religious representation, just as, equally, is the cult of a "figure", *Gestalt*, having existence exclusively in the or a past. The notion of spirit, coinciding indeed with Christianity's own Pentecostal vision, transcends such representation.³

*

So, in Hegel, the Idea, in which logic terminates and within which logic proceeds to this its inherent apotheosis, is revealed, self-outed, externalised as nature, as revelation, word as we said, as *thus* having become "a living spirit" or spirit simply. The Idea *has been* revealed as flesh, as nature, in order to be spirit. The philosophic mind, looking at and through this, is "oned" or at-oned with Spirit just thereby. "This is eternal life, to know...". To know, it need hardly be added, is to know God, is to know one's self as a knowing, to know, finally, knowing. Self vanishes at this acme of self-consciousness, since this itself is conscious of nothing else.

Spirit, that is, is the first reality, not merely reversing "time's arrow" but therein and thereby annihilating time "from the first", so to say (in temporal metaphor). In logical analysis reflection is at work in the uncovering of this, but only because reflection is a moment of the Idea, of spirit itself. This belongs to the ontology of logic and of its forms.

This instantaneous process (of reflection) is what the doctrine of divine Trinity *represents*, as Hegel identifies it. He is at once therefore accused of himself *misrepresenting* that just in transcending its representational character. This, however, is Hegel's whole project, to take up and thereby supersede religion in philosophy. I am claiming that this is, identically, the project of religion and the achievement of the absolute religion itself. Hegel's thought looks back to that as eternally achieved and therefore present, as much in his thought as everywhere else. As absolute religion,

³ On the whole question of the relation of Representation and Concept in Hegel, as of "speculative rewriting", cf. Cyril O'Regan: *The Heterodox Hegel*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1994, especially the final Part Three, pp. 327-370. Cf. also *The Phenomenology of Mind* (Baillie), New York 1967, p.765.

therefore, religion supersedes itself, rips the veil from its own temple, thus witnessing, as was primordially declared, that God does not dwell in any finite temple except as he, the Idea, dwells in, as identified with, each and all, from human souls to a burning bush or that piece of music you heard when you were very young, that face you adored and have not ceased adoring.

This linking up with the Trinity is Hegel's tribute to, his identification with, orthodoxy. Here, just here, we encounter his characteristic doctrine of reflection, again, with which the section on Essence in the *Logic* begins. For his thought is so constituted, and not merely "set up", so that one cannot pose as a dilemma that such thought is either derived positively from the Trinity as "revealed", thus producing that contradiction in terms, a "dogmatic philosophy", or that it itself posits a or the Trinity as if for the first time, bypassing religion and its teaching.

The same applies to his thought's relation to that other main doctrine of faith, though Hegel's thought in itself and for these very reasons quite liberates faith from this distorted rendering of it as a repeating of formulae on authority which, by definition, one does not oneself understand. Such faith brings its adherents no knowledge of God or Christ whatever. I refer here, anyhow, to the doctrine of creation of a world. This is in general posited or proposed for belief in complete separation from the doctrine of the Trinity, overlooking the credal statement, concerning the Trinitarian Word or Son, "through (*per*) whom all things were made". This echoes John's Gospel: "All things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made". The "him" stands as much for "the word" as for "God" in this text, since "the word was God" as being "in the beginning" with God. This "being with" is a strict identity. God is process and method of *logic*, the latter's Idea going forth as Nature⁴, as Spirit moving. So Hegel would be Biblically orthodox, by chance or design, in thus closely relating Trinity, creation and, later, incarnation.

The creation, that is, is necessary as Spirit's being-in-process. It is thus, so to say, there before it is there and this is, again, reflection. It is presupposed to itself. Freedom is our name for this necessity, of God as

⁴ Cf. Hegel, *Enc.* 244: "Enjoying, however, an absolute liberty, the Idea does not merely pass over into life, or as finite cognition allow life to show in it: in its own absolute truth [it] resolves to let the 'moment' of its particularity, or of the first characterisation and other-being, the immediate idea, as its reflected image, go forth freely as Nature." In fact "the percipient Idea (*als Anschauen*) is Nature" (*und die anschauende Idee Natur*), an assertion balanced by the (in the original) double-spaced, for emphasis, final declaration, *sich als Natur frei aus sich zu entlassen*, thus avoiding all taint of an essentially "finite" pantheism.

self-emptying without being emptied, since what goes out from him just thereby returns to him. The supreme or exemplary emptying is what faith has called and fixed as *incarnation*, thereby accepting the common assumption of men regarding the independent reality of flesh, the carnal, seen and touched, which indeed Hegel confirms without letting go of his absolute idealism whereby such matter, although the place of immediate knowledge, is ideal only, as is required by the Idea's infinity as Spirit. That this appears as *one* human being, Hegel says, in a certain agreement with Plato (one "over against" many), is or was necessary. It is "what was to be", Aristotle's definition of essence. Once there, it is then normative or known absolutely as thus *bound* to be there, to "appear". "The factual is normative", all the way along, and each or any person is thus urged, by natural law, to "become what you are", a phrase annihilating all becoming when merely literally or temporally viewed. We can only become what we are as having, by our being, already become it.

So the first creation passes into the second, as faith and theology express it; the face of Adam is the face of Christ. The next doctrine to be thus spiritually interpreted, "understanding spiritual things spiritually", is the Fall of Man. Before this, however, more should be said on this notion of necessity in its relation, of identity, to freedom. "What can happen at some time does happen", Thomas Aquinas claimed, given that time is viewed as an infinite and necessary series. By this if God's non-being could happen then God would not now be. In the true infinity of the Concept, however, Hegel adds to this, every possibility is actual and so the idea of a contingent happening is simply obliterated, contingency itself being no more than a dialectical moment of the Idea. This resolves itself ultimately into the identity of the non-identical, a notion Hegel admits that people find difficult!

The difficulty people find in these conceptions is due solely to sticking to the term "is", and forgetting the character of thought, where the moments as much *are* as they *are not*, - are only the process which is Spirit (*Phenomenology of Mind*, Baillie, p.777: the whole paragraph and following, concerning "this spiritual unity", should be consulted.

Yet the Absolute transits continually into its otherness. But how "on earth" is thought to get hold of such a notion, of the denial of the very possibility, even or especially logically, of getting a hold as such, by anything upon anything? Answer: only by grasping all at once, in the Concept or as the Idea (of freedom). Freedom thus conceived is absolute reconciliation, marriage of heaven and hell or of what are posited as essentially divorced. These images, however, fall short of the *philosophic* notion whereby the

supposed opposites, whether married or divorced, are in truth the same. Thus also in religion, an instrument of torture and shame can be “wondrous”, the power and glory, the *foolishness* of the absolute wisdom of God. The philosopher Hegel is at home with these apparent contradictions, this harmonic dissonance from which arises, out of scepticism namely, the phoenix-like Idea as “its own result”, though this may seem but another “contradiction in terms”. It is rather a “contradiction in performance”, alive and walking, so to say. If this is “only” analogously a contradiction yet, by the same movement of thought, specifically logical contradiction could be made out, in reverse, as merely analogous to this, in which case, however, all judgment must indeed cease as false, as Hegel declares and judges, though this too is but a “one-sided” moment of thought's process. One-sidedness itself, that is, can only be one-sidedly identified.

These results might recall to us, as one application of it, the Scriptural saying: “My thoughts are not your thoughts”. Thus logic has ever been regarded as “God's thought” (J. Lukasiewicz⁵). That's the point of it. Yet it was also or just thereby our or any mind. Nothing has changed. This is still the case. Logic takes us beyond, transcends even, “our” thoughts. Simultaneously, however, it confirms not abstractive, two-dimensional reasoning, with which logic is frequently confounded, but what Hegel calls the “true reason-world”, common to every stage and variant of human life, in all its different styles and paradigms, to child and the aged, to the cultured or trained and the amateur, since it is just such persons, any person as such, who is able to come up, as one did, with a saying such as that God's thoughts are not as ours or that thought must, as it there does, go beyond itself as *resulting from itself*. “Man proposes, God disposes”: this saying shows the proverbial awareness of this. *Der Mensch denkt, aber Gott lenkt*. Or there is the common saying: “It is and it isn't”, “Yes-No” for short. These insights were awaiting formalisation, have from time to time received it and are continuing to do so. In Hegel they are formalised in the sense of systematised, by way of natural language. This is the only possibility, since “technical” formalisation has as its very nature and function to separate identity and difference, which we find here joined, in all possible worlds.

Is Hegel perverse? No, I answer, but his system rather expresses truth as such in its simplicity, namely the Absolute Idea, in his words, which is itself the absolute (*Enc.* 213) and *vice versa*. What then is an idea, for Hegel? That question must be asked at some point and answered, as is

⁵ Cited in Coope, Geach, Potts & White (Department of Philosophy, University of Leeds): *A Wittgenstein Workbook*, Oxford 1971, no.7: Logic as Mirror of the World”, p.22.

done in either version of his logic (cf. *Enc.* 45 and the addition, comparing Hegel's with Kant's account). Regarding the Absolute Idea specifically, Hegel's view emerges as that God is spirit (*Geist*, mind), a thesis he identifies as "the lesson of Christianity" (my stress). In this respect, however, Christianity concurs with or absorbs, rather, the Aristotelian metaphysics of *nous*, though Hegel will say Aristotle did not grasp in its fullness the universality of mind, since this is not fully understood unless identified with human nature as such and not just with Greeks or males or adults, say. This might raise the unresolvable question, as it might seem, as to "when" first the biological substance becomes bearer of spirit. Was it at conception, birth, as *homunculus* or when? One counters with the reminder that in Hegel's thought time and beginning, a notion inseparable from time, which just therefore cannot itself begin, are not after all themselves notional but, rather, representations used by spirit for as long as it needs it, the "long" here denoting a logical rather than a temporal length. "Spirit necessarily appears in time... so long as it does not grasp its pure notion, i.e. so long as it does not annul time".⁶ This, however, applies to the whole of biology in the first place, as studying an idea, life namely, that is not yet mediated. The criticism of Aristotle, therefore, must go deeper and Hegel does not shrink from it. Nonetheless he regards Aristotle's book on the soul, to which he stays close, as perhaps the only worthwhile text, still, on that subject. The fact is that Greeks, males and adults are all equally phenomenal and hence, in Hegel's deflationary sense, *ideal* only, notionally fleeting moments of the Idea in its freedom.⁷

Hegel's system, therefore, is the systematisation of the "simple" truth, as he himself confirms, that God, the Idea, is all truth so that we are on the right road when we view all creation and everything in it as evil or, a variant, as nothing ("sham-being" he can also say). That indeed looks like "heresy" but simple consideration of his meaning in context shows that it is not, any more than are identical statements to this made by the Christian (and other) mystics. "Remember o man that you are but dust", the newly elected Pope is told, dust here standing not for ordered corporeality but for nothing simply. "Dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return". This again is not a physiological or anthropological presumption (as such it would be incorrect) but a statement of the nothingness of the finite, of man taken as man, of time. The spirit within him belongs rather to God and that is why Aristotle can describe thinking/or philosophy as "death-practising". By the

⁶ *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p.800. The whole paragraph merits careful study.

⁷ Consult here Axel Randrup's (International Centre for Interdisciplinary Psychiatric Research, CIRIP) Internet paper: "Cognition and Biological Evolution: An Idealist Approach resolves a Fundamental Paradox" (2004).

same token Hegel denominates death as the actual “entry into spirit”. Man may be dust, yet I am not. “What is man, that though art mindful of him?” Man, we might answer, is that being (no longer thus a phenomenon) that is not himself, that transcends his phenomenality. Man, as mind, is not man. The individual is “ruined” and that in inception, so to speak. He has to “become what he is”. Hegel envisages this as a task, a duty, which is yet in essence accomplished, though it is “our affair” (Hegel), all the same, phenomenally. McTaggart adds that no man is better or worse than he should be, an observation he claims is in no way destructive of ethics or the virtues. It is *the* adult attitude, Hegel had said. Thus it was God, we are told, who hardened Pharaoh's heart and vessels of destruction are just that, though (or hence?) Judas is declared a saint in the Ethiopian church. Still, anyone who hopes is not such a vessel, given that hope is a virtue. But who knows if he hopes, a Hegelian might ask, while replying: *Dum spiro spero*. This though seems to make hope as phenomenal as breathing, a passion more than a virtue, needing still to be raised to a rational habit. Hegel here confirms the Kantian critique of virtue ethics, not however so as to fall for the sheer ideality of Kantian legalism. For Hegel, as for Sartre or De Beauvoir, ethics just do not belong to the final count, Objective Spirit, in Hegel's terminology, remaining outside the doors of Absolute Spirit as, like the Baptist, less than the least in that self-standing kingdom. In this philosophic or mystical sense Thérèse of Lisieux declared she had no virtues and meant it literally. By the same token though, one might add, she was not she. “You are she who is not: I am he who is”, declared God in sexist vein to the Dominican tertiary of Siena, she who said she felt she carried the whole weight of the then Church upon her back. Dialectically, as not being herself, she becomes self-conscious universal cognition. Thus Hegelianism can appear as natural as the first great commandment to which the second is “like”. These considerations should help to resolve that appearance of heterodoxy in Hegel's account, especially in relation to its historical antecedents, to which Cyril O'Regan would draw attention in his *The Heterodox Hegel*, not however, he stresses, in a mood of “heresy-hunting”.

So one may laud, with Mark D. Jordan (“The *Summa's* Reform of Moral Teaching – and its Failures” in *Contemplating Aquinas*, ed. Fergus Kerr OP, SCM Press London 2003, UND Press 2006), Aquinas's incorporation of “virtue ethics” into Christian moral theology. It remains, though, as MacIntyre ambiguous title, *After Virtue*, might seem to indicate, a particular and hence phenomenal exercise in so far as a “table” of the virtues is set up. The reality is love, which Hegel equates with thinking, and without which, says St. Paul, I, and hence virtue, am nothing. Hence

also eternal life, spirit, is “to know God”, is thought, whether in Hegel's philosophy or in John's Gospel. Yet, it follows, knowing too, without love, is nothing, is not knowing, while love too is also described on occasion as “unknowing”, “and night shall be my day”. Whatever anyone does is, so to say, redeemable (an image from pawnbrokery), except, that is, the denial of just this. Hegel's account of *pardon* is germane here, while to deny it is to deny freedom, power and infinity, actuality even. Ultimately, by “the necessity in the content of the absolute picture-idea” (*Enc.* 573), the good, the one redeeming, is “made sin for us”, a curse hung on a tree.

Here we can see how this language, this reality and the account of it, in the realm, pictured or not, essentially of thought, such that *it* cannot “have happened” without overthrowing the whole idea of a happening (which is in fact what happens!), this, I say, is not tied to finitely defective theories of “atonement” on a legal model, for sin, for “our” very finitude, for finitude itself. It is rather exactly what is done in Hegel's logic itself, again, is the abrogation, namely, of the finite as never having been, the progress from shadows to reality of what was thus never such a shadow merely, its beginning contained in its end. Hence one does not find it, this particular theory of atonement, in Hegel's own account of the Christian Gospel or Good News. “Behold, I go to the Father”. That's all, “and where I am there you will be”, again by a purely Hegelian principle, which, again, one may or may not think of as derived from the record of that utterance, or from that text simply. Such derivation in no way spoils or invalidates the later seeing in logic, resulting therefrom or not, of the truth of this saying, “where I am there will you be also”. It could in fact be said by anyone to or of anyone. It declares the all-embracing unity of the concept. *Seid umschlungen millionen*, not forgetting though that, since we are dealing with identity, “it is useless to count”. *Numeri non ponuntur in divinis*, writes Aquinas on the Trinity. “Be embraced, ye millions” does not merely mean we should be embraced by one another. And yet, in what else does it consist as realised? Loving the brother is embodiment and not merely moralistic sign of divine love.

*

The idea of a creation “in time” is, taken literally, a contradiction. It posits time as something beside or alongside God, who is thus made finite for thought, whether or not one adds that God has no “need” thus to create. Necessity and freedom, Hegel has shown, are, at their highest, one. Similarly, the necessity of my being places no limit upon God. If I were

not then God would not be, *just as* if God were not then I would not be, Eckhart had already declared. This is Hegelian "self-consciousness". In Merleau-Ponty's phrase, "I am the absolute source". This was no mere Frenchman's hubris but simply the latest version of those tribesmen's aboriginal belief, in Australia, that their own ancestors had created the world.⁸

Nearer to the truth than any seeing of the world as an *object* left by God as sign of his inviolable invisibility, so to say, is that frankly pictorial account by the Psalmist (*Psalms*, number 104, Vulgate 103) of the world as like a series of garments whereby God at once reveals and conceals himself but as expression of his essential fecundity, something, that is to say, essential to his being a spirit and not some need from outside thus to complete himself, as if the object, object as such, were not a moment merely of mind, of logical process, of the Idea which itself is the absolute (EL212).

Similarly, for Augustine the divine or Trinitarian footprints (Lat. *vestigia*) are left hidden in creation as mere vestiges of God it is the business of thought upon experience to uncover, as in the familiar proof, from the self-contradiction of contingency taken absolutely, of an indwelling or inherent necessity "which all call God". Inasmuch as this proof is a progress from a false to a true position, starting from a world known purely *quoad nos* or from the human perspective and not anything as "known in itself", the later Ontological Argument, reasoning from within logic itself, was in Hegel's view more cogent. What examination of this argument, in modern times typically, made plain, however, was that the disclosure, the effect, of its truth is not separable from the system of thought as a whole. Here the truth of God emerges as the crown and "end", in either sense, the true "design", of thought as such, as truly reflected in the system of logic. The truth of this system, as that "Golgotha of the Spirit", i.e. the true one, which *The Phenomenology of Mind* ends by proclaiming as what Hegel next intends to chart (in and with *The Science of Logic*), is shown precisely in its conclusion to the absolutely necessary, the Idea which alone or absolutely is or is real. It is both form of the infinite and itself infinite form, in identity of Content and Form. As such content it is no sense abstract, is "the concrete universal" that is itself individual. Hence, Hegel adds, developing Spinoza, it is "the absolute person", to which, namely, all other personality is relatively identical. Here he simultaneously develops Kant's "Kingdom of Ends" as giving its rationale.

⁸ Cited in Randrup (see previous note).

This conclusion of itself answers the criticisms by Kant or Aquinas of this, in effect, “ontological argument” by showing that this argument, thought through, was all along shorthand for the whole system of logic or of thought, of mind, *nous*. In this system existence, along with objectivity, the object, are no more than moments within the Idea. The Idea is identical with precisely in its difference from any such finite and hence “ideal” notions, the first of which, though it will also be the last, is being simply, *auch erfülltes Sein* (GL, final section, Suhrkamp 6, Frankfurt 1969, p.572). Reality, to use Kant’s term, is shown to be precisely Idea. Therefore reality cannot be contrasted against the ideal as is done precisely by Aquinas or Kant, though Aquinas will still defend that ordered assembly of *a posteriori* proofs, which Kant claimed to have refuted precisely in refuting the ontological argument (at the cost of a hundred dollars!) but which Hegel, unmoved, after examining them, by Kant’s claims, later continued to defend in his *Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God*. In Hegel, anyhow, the “ideal” is rather contrasted against the Idea, positing this latter as “the true being”, infinite over against as including, as “moment”, the finite.⁹

In the system of logic, therefore, as analysed by Hegel and upon which Mill in no way improved, what is “merely” ideal becomes precisely the mark of the finite. Hence true infinity is not *a* notion at all, simply because it is *the* notion, *the* concept, mind itself or spirit as act, to which the finite adds nothing. Thus infinity cannot be anything other than mind, such as some huge beast or material thing or a quantitative mathematical series. It cannot even be being as immediately conceived, yet it *is* what is finally conceived as self-conceiving, “thought thinking itself” as Hegel ends his *Encyclopaedia* by citing, in the original, from Aristotle. Nor is there warrant for asserting, as do many, a separate sense to the “is” of the *copula* from that of the “is” of being, since it is just the word’s sense that accounts also for its copulative function to the point of identity of subject and predicate, basic to Hegel’s discussion throughout. The Idea is the reality, the absolute or the Kantian *ens realissimum*, should we admit such a notion. Immaterial being just *is* mind. On this scheme of ontology, call it negative, call it spiritual and/or positive, thought is prior to reality. Essence, in the Hegelian formulation, is prior to *erfülltes* being as the Idea though this succeeds as reflection upon immediate being, essence mediating. The two of them, being and essence, thus necessarily merge in the Concept, in the Idea as the true reality and absolute, as *erfülltes Sein*.

⁹ Cf. *Enc.*95: “This ideality of the finite is the chief maxim of philosophy”. See also, again, GL, the two final paragraphs.

This is indeed what Aquinas considered true but not self-evident and he was thus far right. The self-evidence of the “ontological argument” for God’s truth, put as existence, is not separable from the self-declaration of logic, of its method (Gk. *meta hodon*, according to the Way) as the Idea’s, the absolute’s, “own result”, whether as self-caused or as self-warranting or both, as necessity in and as freedom, not put there by anything other but self-positing just in its idea, in itself inclusive of the whole of creation, of nature, as the latter’s own self-manifestation, indifferently or as, just thereby adding nothing, *plura entia sed non plus entis* as the Scholastics said. In Hegel’s words, God is his manifestation, is revelation as such, *diffusivum sui* and not diffusive of something else. To look is to look through, to *perceive*, but no longer *per speculum in aenigmate*, the length here however being a length of logical thought rather than of sheer time. For Hegel indeed there is no difference, spirit ultimately annulling time.

Creation, thus viewed, is precisely not anything separate from God himself, though we may still picture it as “in” God. So God becomes in his very concept a man just as being that with which “we” are each and all identified, *in* that man. That man, in turn, is not to be abstractly identified with the supposed (*gemeinten*) figure of historical or sacral narrative. That would be to have confused “getting at” the concept with getting at the supposed historical beginnings of the Christian or indeed philosophical movement as an historical phenomenon. The idea of faith emerges here as one with that of a progressively spiritual interpretation and account of things, such as the logic and finally the philosophy of spirit, mediated from ideal logic by creation, by nature, supplies. So Hegel identifies “universal self-consciousness” with “that atoning reconciliation” (*Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 777).

True logic, that is, is not that system of written signs we encounter on the written page and to which only we give whatever “intentionality” they may have. It is rather the *schlechthin intensive Totalität* (Hegel italicises *intensive*) while, as it were conversely, the very “method” is “the true concept, only self-related, which is *Being*”. Nor, *a fortiori*, is philosophy as a whole anything of this composite kind, nor even is it some body of doctrine taught in a classroom. It is rather a process of mind itself, identical in both student and teacher, who thus become one, as the doctor is one with nature as healing. Hence the teaching of logic is without meaning as an idea except as the assisted process of the student’s coming to see for himself the conditions for validity of thought and/or speech.

If, however, the proof of God is declared one with the system and method of logic then can one not claim that God is here abrogated, as having been a false extrapolation of the warp and woof of the actual, the

real? This objection overlooks precisely what it sees, that immediate experience has itself been found to take real form as and only as a system of thought or logic, system here being one with a unique Absolute Idea. It is this Idea alone which then, of necessity in its freedom, “goes forth as Nature” so as to return in and as Spirit, finally as Absolute Spirit. That and that alone is what God is and this alone, therefore, is the true situating of that moment of thought that calls itself atheism as overturning the representations of religion or even of art. Such atheism forgets that theology and Scriptural commentary did and do exactly the same thing, Aristotle’s metaphysics being the prime example (of the former), unless pride of place be given to that later movement, called by Hegel the absolute religion, where a man says that whoever sees him has seen God, that he and God are one, a claim repeated in other traditions by such as al Hallaj and others, down, *mutatis mutandis*, to Nietzsche and beyond. This is what Hegel calls self-consciousness, which is indeed a sense of standing out from the crowd. It is thus esoteric, as Hegel puts it. Christianity claims, however, that the aspiration to the esoteric is or should be exoteric, the striving to enter on “the narrow way”. This, anyhow, rather than virtue as such, is the truly honourable good, Aquinas teaches¹⁰, and thus “power is the morality of those who stand out from the rest”, to quote Hegel’s deaf musical contemporary. Or “I have that within which passes seeming” as Shakespeare’s creation says to his mother, recalling that other “What have I to do with thee, woman?” of the Gospel narrative. Yet the woman, herself self-conscious, philosophy even (in Boethius), obliges him to act.

*

If we turn now to the doctrine of the Fall of Man, whereby he rises to knowledge, we find Hegel treating original and actual *sin* under one notion, that of an habituation to knowledge as a necessary and yet free disturbing of an original harmony of nature, this “evil” being in fact the essence of immanent spirit (*Geist*). For this reason if for no other there is no specific ethics or abstracted moral theology in Hegel’s systematic writings, nothing either corresponding to a separate critique of “practical reason”. A metaphysic of morals, of which Kant gave us little more than the title, Hegel in truth provides, in the sense, that is to say, of a complete absorption, *Aufhebung*, of any kind of objectified moral realm into an ontology of knowledge and being under the one (and only) concept.

¹⁰ On this, see our “The *bonum honestum* and the Lack of Moral Motive in Aquinas’s Ethical theory”, *The Downside Review*, April 2000., pp. 85-110.

Knowledge is in fact absolute being, the necessary intellectuality of the immaterial, the spiritual, as such. This is precisely the ontology of Thomas Aquinas taken to its explicit philosophical conclusion, eclipsing all dualism. In that respect it is a step backward from Kant, who had made of specific practical reason a separate faculty from reason pure or as such, as the tradition had not done. For Aquinas praxis of any kind is simply reason itself as *ordinata ad opus*, directed to a work, to action, while contrariwise, with Aristotle, thinking, contemplation, is declared, under ethics, as “the highest praxis”. It is, that is to say, not merely a “metaphysic of morals” but the incorporating, by thought, of morality, the category, into metaphysics as the Idea. Thus sin becomes equated with knowledge, this being Hegel's interpretation of the words of the serpent, wisest of beasts, in the story. Here, above all, what is a story cannot as such be a doctrine, a truth realised long before Hegel but which he treated systematically and therefore theologically. As such the doctrine throws great light upon psychology and human studies generally, as historical motor of their development. This is the background against which we may understand Hegel's words about the wickedness of conscience, instead of affecting an unintelligent attitude of being scandalised, after the manner of J.N. Findlay. That statement depends upon Hegel's more radical affirmation that “good and evil are the same”, which in reverse turn, so to say, help toward understanding this so-called dark affirmation, already made in Chapter VII of his earliest major work as, he says, first part of his system. It is offered just here in the science of logic (supremely at the addition to paragraph 24 of the *Encyclopaedia*) as part, almost the climax, of his getting and presenting a “Preliminary Notion of Logic”, just before his insertion of the earlier manuscript (from the *Propädeutik*), slightly adapted, concerning the “three attitudes to objectivity”, between that and the proper account of the definition and three divisions of logic as science of the Idea. For Hegel spiritual life as such consists in knowledge (“This is eternal life, to know God...” he will have read in the Fourth Gospel). To this “cognition” all conscious practical living and willing is assumed, thus freed of their usual abstractedness. What is hypostatised as will is the inseparable inclination or passion, even, of mind itself to or for itself, as we can also read, *mutatis mutandis*, in Thomas Aquinas, but not in the later more “decadent scholasticism” of which Kant might be seen as the last representative, in this respect at least. (cp. A. de Muralt, “*Kant, le dernier occamien*” in *Revue de métaphysique et morale*, No. 1, 1975). In fact, however, the tradition continues on from Kant into Hegel, Nietzsche and beyond. Attempts, Scottish (MacIntyre), American (Deely) or French (Gilson, Maritain), to discern a break between the modern era and all

preceding it are therefore in need of a revision by scholars. Descartes was not a mere anomaly. The medieval vitality itself prepared the modern revolution, continuing in parallel with Renaissance scholasticism (Poinset, Leibniz) up to and into the post-modern free-for.all, thus exhibiting the relative "ideality", the finitude, of revolution as itself a finite concept, a moment, that is, of the one Idea, as Hegel treats it in his first great work and first part, he declares, of his system, *The Phenomenology of Mind*.

*

It is not by chance that Hegel's analysis of the *Genesis* story, closely bound up with the Christian doctrine of original and subsequent "sin", is given at the close of his preparatory analysis, in his *Encyclopaedia* (24 add.), of thought as "the heart and soul of the world" such that logic, "the form of thought", "is the perfect form", this being "the general dogma of all philosophy". "Dogma" is used here figuratively as thus suggesting, by analogy with religion, the absolute. Philosophy, that is, is a kind of "new testament" of knowledge, involving "necessary" *rupture* with the older, aboriginal and immediate knowledge abiding within innocent nature, human or other. It is thus of itself, he claims to show, in close association with our notions of evil and disunion or rebellion against an established order. To this its necessary role corresponds the part of Satan or, in the story, the deceiving and yet, it seems conceded, truth-speaking serpent. All this belongs to what Hegel calls the "preliminary notion", to, namely, the "doctrine of the notion" or to logic and the science thereof. Knowledge, indeed, is "the wonderful division of the spirit against itself", breaking with natural innocence as Satan disturbs the harmony of the angels in heaven and is therefore cast out. This though cannot be the last word and so, to "redeem" the situation, Hegel will declare the unity in identity of good and evil, which, he adds, must be maintained without losing sight of their absolute difference. There is no shirking this movement of thought, religion's own best kept secret perhaps. Once disclosed by Hegel it was Nietzsche who carried it forward, as in continuity with developing tradition, rather than reactionaries such as G.K. Chesterton, C.S. Lewis or Etienne Gilson, whom, however, we may prefer to read and who even themselves may attain to the fuller truth, thus "casting out" this Satan who yet must be admitted into the scheme of things. I know of no better expression of this two-sided verdict than the speech of Puddleglum in Lewis's *The Silver Chair* in his Narnia series. Puddleglum thus defeats the witch-serpent with these words:

But four babies playing a game can make a play-world that licks your real world hollow. That's why I'm going to stand by the play-world. I'm on Aslan's side even if there isn't any Aslan to lead it. I'm going to live as like a Narnian as I can even if there isn't any Narnia.

After this Puddlegum painfully extinguishes, with his bare "marshwiggle" foot, the smoking enchantment the witch, in her assumed loveliness (she is really a serpent), has set going. One might say, though, that this too, such words, corresponds to Hegel's setting of the Idea over Being as itself the final being. The fact remains, however, that philosophy can appear essentially as a "lifting of the hand against God", in Heidegger's word. This, however, Hegel had attempted to show, is mere first appearance, which is the same as to say that it is indeed a moment, but only a moment, to be overcome, in the scheme of things where the Idea is necessarily, or by logic, "its own result". Hegel indeed had earlier cast Satan as a fourth Trinitarian person, thus recognising the moment of truth, but only a moment, in the ancient Persian religion from which the figure of Satan historically derives. Thus he immediately suggests a fifth such person, while remarking: "it is useless to count". *Numeri non ponuntur in divinis* (Aquinas).

This Satanic moment, which was always implicit, is also identifiable, as in the Adam and Eve story, with an abstractly rampant sexuality as a moment, again, that is only fulfilled in the boundlessly delightful love of all and each for all and each as lamb and lion lie down together in a "world without end *amen*", enduring through all the ages past, present or future, the final calm of ecstasy which flesh cannot endure, since thought is its watchword and emblem. Hence death is the entry into spirit, Hegel affirms.

The Mosaic legend of the Fall of Man has preserved an ancient picture representing the origin and consequences of this disunion. The incidents of the legend form the basis of an essential article of the creed, the doctrine of original sin in man and his consequent need of succour. It may be well at the commencement of logic to examine the story which treats of the origin and the bearings of the very knowledge which logic has to discuss.

Note the twofold reference to logic! Philosophy "cannot afford to neglect these popular conceptions", while not allowing herself to "be overawed by religion", as if existing "on sufferance", a situation implicit in the notion, for example, of "Catholic philosophy". In this sense if the absolute religion is perfected in philosophy it does in some sense disappear as having become philosophy. This is the logical outcome of the ecumenical

principle explicitly recognised in Catholicism since the 1964 conciliar "Decree on Ecumenism". As of old, God has a name and yet you cannot name him. As the Idea, in limitless freedom, as spirit, he "will be what he will be", which, that comes down to saying, is nothing because it is everything and yet is only everything because it is nothing or "smaller than small" (as suggested, in effect, by Nicholas of Cusa,).

The Fall-story "exemplifies the universal bearings of knowledge upon the spiritual life". This first wears "the garb of innocence and confiding simplicity" although "the very essence of spirit implies the absorption of this immediate condition in something higher". Who has not discovered this perpetual *Aufhebung*? Yet the spiritual is more revolutionary than developmental in essence, thus opposed frontally to nature in that. It is opposed, that is, as opposing itself constitutively, since it "sunders itself to self-realisation", is in fact this sundering and self-realisation in one, strength of mind as we say. So "the hand that inflicts the wound is also the hand which heals it".

Adam and Eve are "the types of humanity". The tree of knowledge, paired with the tree of life, is itself or as such the tree of knowledge of good and evil specifically, as if there were no other knowledge. As such one shall not eat of it. Yet it is there, as it were waiting, and so, Hegel insists, the eating of its fruit will be no mere tragic mischance. With this Hegel does not deny that it is, so to say, forbidden. Rather, that "is to a certain extent correct" since the "disunion that appears throughout humanity is not a condition to rest in", but quite the reverse. Yet this does not mean that "the natural and immediate harmony" is or ever was "the right state". Childlike innocence only "reminds us of what the spirit must *win for itself*" eventually (my stress), as "the second harmony". Hegel might here be thinking of the Pauline "second Adam". This, though, in line with this whole discourse, would telescope together, as image and far-off object, the first and originating sin with him who was "made sin for us", in words of the earliest Christian and Pauline speculative theology. So, anyhow, he stresses the *becoming* as little children, in Christ's famous words, here. It has nothing or very little to do with a putative remaining always children. A spirit-constituting rupture of harmony must be gone through, whether as sin in particular or some other interim morbidity, under which Hegel might perhaps class the threefold temptation of Christ as imagined in the Gospel or even the three day separation, at the age of twelve, from his anxious parents in Jerusalem, while taking the heaven-sent chance, as we say, to interrogate the nation's "spiritual" and/or political leaders

So Hegel sets the stage. The eating of the fruit, the arch-sin as it is put as being, is the birth of properly spiritual life, typically the birth in shame of the finally godlike or infinite self-consciousness partaken of fully by each one in the new kingdom, as such or in sacrament. "Where each receives a thousand receive". This later transfiguration, necessarily, in Hegel's scheme, as is not mentioned here but which he alludes to elsewhere, takes place through one man's mediation, dying for or in place of each person individually and wholly, this being the treading down of the serpent's head, as it is here "foretold", the promise in the curse, so that he must henceforth creep on the ground, as if that were not already the descriptive force of his name (in all our translations at least, making of this a "just so" or Kiplingesque story, as to how the serpent became *serpens*). This mediator, called the *woman's* "seed", which is thus, in the text, she herself (*Gen. 3, 15: semen illius: ipsa*), a second Eve to match the second Adam, as the later Mariology will begin its as yet unfinished development. This, again, is the blessing pairing the curse here mentioned of expulsion from paradise into our world of labour and sweat and painful child-bearing, this though even in itself a reverse face of joy that a new vessel of spirit is born (cf. *John 16, 21*). We have later to investigate this further and how Hegel's thinking derives it from consideration of spiritual exigency. I think too that it is because of such necessity, obscurely recognised, that what can otherwise seem like magical prophecies are found in our most hallowed books, as indeed nature's own movements, from which likenesses are regularly taken by spiritual doctors or great thinkers generally. Such a necessity was expressed in a belief that one individual must come to right wrongs, thus losing his individuality as abstractly considered, and, after that, that he will, therefore, "come again" and so on, a belief that slowly removes the temporal element from such be-coming, "new every morning". The solution is near to hand, rather. Only "harden not your hearts... today... if you shall hear his voice".

Regarding this shame we mentioned that the story highlights, Hegel remarks that the sense of it is evidence of "the separation of man from his natural and sensuous life", placing him above the beasts rather than illustrating a sense of sin in the more Augustinian sense. Culturally, under the weight of this consideration, the passion of shame modulates into the virtue of modesty, though this evokes in turn, maybe, a joyous exhibitionism or letting down of hair on occasion, as we say. Scripture shows this openness to such play in the tale it tells of King David's wife Michal, who lost the chance of motherhood through her prissiness about this, poor girl. David had cavorted publicly and shamelessly before the "ark of the Lord", thus embarrassing her.

The serpent, however, as tempter, gives the outward solicitation, Hegel notes, though it remains true that “the step into opposition, the awakening of consciousness, follows from the very nature of man” or woman in the first place here. Her being seduced, that is, both comes and does not come from without, and it is rather simplistic of Sartre to call this “bad faith” simply. As “Mrs. Hughes” says in the *Downton Abbey* television series, “I thought you would never ask”: i.e. she was waiting for it, the marriage proposal, and quite naturally. Thus too the doctor solicits nature’s own self-healing, the teacher the pupil’s self-tuition. So we are tempted by our surroundings, our colleagues, as already having “fallen”.

The serpent, Hegel says, “represents likeness to God as consisting in the knowledge of good and evil”. This likeness, that is, and not evil, is his first concern. Yet “it is just this knowledge in which man participates when he breaks with the unity of his instinctive being”, understanding now, or beginning to, where babies come from, as you might say. For the attempts of religious apologists to avoid an easy but depressing misreading of the first sin as sexual often go too far in the opposite direction. What other form could the new self-consciousness take than awareness of one’s physical involvement thus in humanity as such, in an essentially reproducing form? “Stand back”, Adam shouts at his wife, in one comical retelling of this scene of disharmony: “I don’t know how big this thing gets”. It is the intimacy of it, of the knowing as such, that is overwhelming, though Hegel does not dwell much upon that here. That indeed is the first figuring of the spirit as essentially love, which is the truth, I in you and you in me or, universally taken, I in them and they in me, I being itself (myself) the “universal of universals”, says Hegel. There is no escaping “the mixing of amorousness with religion” (Newman) and therefore with philosophy, as Plato abundantly illustrates but which celibates such as Newman easily tend to deprecate.

Finally, after the curse, God says: “Behold, Adam has become as one of us, to know good and evil.” So knowledge “is now spoken of as divine, and not, as before, as something wrong and forbidden”. One might think that this implies that such knowledge of evil is itself good but Hegel does not draw this conclusion directly. His deeper view is that of an eventual identity of good and evil, which he can accordingly speak of elsewhere as having to be understood as being found even in God, though he apologises for a saying seemingly so “un-spiritual” and hard to grasp (*Phenomenology of Mind*, VII). So what he says here is that these words (of God)

contain a confutation of the idle talk that philosophy pertains only to the finitude of the mind. Philosophy is knowledge, and it is through knowledge that man first realises his original vocation, to be the image of God.

The expulsion from the Garden with its tree of life, accordingly, “only means that on his natural side certainly man is finite and mortal, but in knowledge infinite”. One is expelled from what one never had. In that very expulsion, however, lies a promise, whether of story or of reason, for which, as for science, “the world” (McTaggart), must be object as of right, such that the rational subject or consciousness must know it “as itself”. This is the world’s rationality, which belongs with it as does water with washing the fur (Frege). One may object that Frege, as a nineteenth century intelligence merely, had never heard of “dry cleaning”, yet his philosophical intention here clearly lies beyond both his century and his choice of metaphors, as it does beyond any unknowable “thing in itself”. In saying “only”, above, Hegel would exorcise the irrational spectre of a total depravity extending even to that rational nature which is indeed “ours”, all the same. “I have said you are gods, but you shall die like men”, as one *Psalm of David* puts it. So, “What is man, that thou art mindful of him?” Thus God, in the story, will reason with Job, as he would not with one totally depraved in his nature. So Bede, commenting, will speak of the “wounds” only of original sin, wounds being, albeit incidentally to Bede’s main purpose perhaps, a limiting concept. What is but wounded yet lives. That Hegel speaks here of man’s “natural *side*” (my stress), contrary to his more usual holism, can be taken to imply a conceptual dominance or “raising” of spirit in which the dualistically natural is quite absorbed. Thus “spirit necessarily appears in time so long as it does not grasp its pure notion”. It, as Paul puts it, “is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body”, implying, in view of time’s conceptual annulment, the warrior-king’s “I shall not die but live”. Thus religion and philosophy have indeed the same content. This is matter for faith in that it cannot be represented, which is precisely the *conceptual* link between religion and philosophy, while, if we would reflect, we would see that this is the mark of art too, that the presented object, of painting or music, to be art, must be simultaneously a presenting of what cannot be re-presented merely, of a *spiritual* element, as of rational system, manifesting what is in nature essentially concealed.

We must anyhow “give up”, Hegel declares, the representing of original sin as “consequent upon an accidental act of the first man”:

Adam lay ibounden,
 Bounden in a bond.
 Four thousand winter,
 Thought he not too long.
 And all was for an apple,
 An apple that he took,

As clerkes finden
 Written in a book.
 Blessed be the time
 That apple taken was.
 Therefore we mun singen
Deo gratias!

The blessedness of the time is the denial of its contingency. "For the very notion of spirit shows that man is evil by nature, and it is an error to imagine that he could ever be otherwise", unless, possibly by some "preternatural" gift or gifts, lost by "the Fall" (freedom from death, ignorance, concupiscence, etc.). Hegel does not refer to this tradition, however, except as perhaps included under this erroneous imagining he speaks of. Or, one must say, the poetic presentations of Chesterton or C.S. Lewis merely re-present the original presentation as pictured, while to say "a new species sinned itself into existence" is but to tarry with pictured or "realist" history while falling short of its dialectical character as finite object contained within the Concept whose only true or proportionate object is itself in self-consciousness, the object, that is, as subject or, hence, conversely. Thus to "tarry with the concept" means, for Hegel, to tarry with nothing else. Thus, one may say, if one likes, that religion is raised, raises itself, he rather means, to its own conceptual self-transcendence by its own indwelling spirit. Nor does anything else impel the artist to ever-new production, transcending the old. "Behold I make all things new." Thus time is the very *representation* of spirit.

The evil, Hegel surely means, all the same, consists in man's finitude, ultimately a non-being, an "ideality" of (our) mind, as is worked out in Hegel's logic. It is due to this ideality that evil can be identified with good in his thought, since the finite is merely a moment (ideal) of the infinite, without which, in logic, the latter would itself be finite too. Thus, in only seeming contradiction, he elsewhere denominates evil as "a sham existence", existence being anyhow a finite category (of Essence), however. Thus it is that being and nothing as together identified yield becoming as of development as a whole, thought's own very method.

*

"To such extent as man is and acts like a creature of nature, his whole behaviour is what it ought not to be. For the spirit it is a duty to be free, and to realise itself by its own act". Such thoughts must have been in the air then and there. "Give me the strength to conquer myself", writes Beethoven in his diaries, adding "Nothing must bind me to life", that

comedy soon to be finished, for him, for all. Yet Hegel hovers between “is” and “acts like”, between the phenomenon of being and the being of the phenomenon, in Sartre’s apt characterisation of the contingent as such, which “ought not to be” except as this vanishing or temporal seeming or “shining”. This is all in some at least phenomenal contrast with the Christian figure of a certain making solid and permanent of what thus becomes a spiritual body, in a heavenly light, and so on. For Hegel light is “nature’s first ideality”, a pregnant phrase indeed, pulling together what we have drawn apart, logic and nature, namely. Thus Blake drew his resurrected bodies as lacking the organs of generation, this though being a positive theological point about eternity or, equally, about generation, as integral to what becomes a whole body of delight, fecundity itself, restricted to no special organ. Thus for Milton love among the angels was a total passing into one another in place of merely local penetration. Meanwhile, Hegel says, our *whole* behaviour is “what it ought not to be”. That would seem to be characterising behaviour as such, however, inasmuch as behaviour is a limited concept. There is, therefore, no contrasting good behaviour. Contemplation is not behaviour, but “letting being be” (Heidegger). It is a finitude in the philosopher that he writes books, or speaks. Spirit must rise above all this, must “use the world as though it (we) used it not” meanwhile, in St. Paul’s apt words. Meanwhile? “What is this little while?” – the disciples ask themselves this on that last evening with the one shortly to be removed from sight, who yet says, “a little while and you shall see me” again. The phrase could refer to time itself. Seeing here though is assimilated to knowing. Literal seeing is phenomenal, ideal, belongs to the finite, like light, though in calling it “ideal” Hegel had seemed to indicate a gleam of spirit from the beginning, a union in disunion of nature and “the Word”. Here we have the backwards and forwards of reflection, the bending into circular return of what only seems to be an arrow, time itself not returning but self-cancelling in this return. Nature is thus for man “only the starting-point” as itself that “which he has to transform”.

So, Hegel concludes, “the theological doctrine of original sin is a profound truth”, transcending the ideal of “modern enlightenment”. It means that man is not “naturally good”. Yet this evil, this leaving of “the path of mere natural being” is itself a transcending of nature. This “schism” though “is not the final goal of men”, though “the whole finite action of thought and will” brings him to it, while he “pursues ends of his own”. Under this, as evil, Hegel therefore includes that natural end of infinite happiness which Aquinas and others argue determines every action, whether good or bad, but from which they conclude that there is no

absolute evil, as even Milton's Satan later exclaimed: "Evil, be thou my good". This though is a *moment* of the Hegelian identification, for sure. In every sin a good is sought, but in disorder, irrationally, ran the traditional teaching. Sin was thus disorder, while for Hegel it is the emerging from merely natural being, itself a mere shadow, in that sense in which nature is opposed to reason or self-movement. More fundamentally, "sin" in fact must denote a *natural evil*, as the ascent to knowledge is presented in the Eden story. By this though, Hegel reasons, evil becomes "the same as good". Yet no murderer has eternal life dwelling within him, we read, but, like Cain, must go through long purification, while marked, however, with divine and hence absolute condemnation. This mark is his as it may be mine. It, he, having "grown up", is no longer nature's. He had rather not been born. Yet as a living spirit he was not born, is "before Abraham", known to God or absolutely, not contingent. Hence Hegel stresses the distinctive Christian doctrine of (mutual) pardon, forgiveness as leading into "revealed religion". In the spirit the spiritual being is divine, is God, "partaker(s) of the divine nature", as the liturgy has it. In this sense "if I were not then God would not be" and conversely (Eckhart, a major Hegelian source). In religious terms, "I have loved thee from before the foundations of the world". This is "deep calling to deep", *cor ad cor loquitur*, philosophy's first intuition, the "know thyself" of Socrates one with the latter-day *cogito*.

Man's natural evil, Hegel sums up, "is to be subjective". Self-consciousness, as completing human development in Hegel's eyes, is no longer a consciousness in the subjective sense but, rather, subjectivity itself or as such. In this sense the absolute is the absolute idea (*Enc.* 212) and conversely. Thus the delaying amongst abstract objectivities is man's finite or naturally evil subjectivity, to which therefore the anti-philosophy called "realism", in the "materialist" but not the Platonic sense, belongs. We are, so to say, responsible for our opinions, as can be seen once the divorce between theory and praxis is conceptually overcome.

This "natural wickedness of man", Hegel goes on, is contrary to his own spirit within him, which the animals lack¹¹. As natural it is what he wills, what he does, therefore. In itself it is his "judgment", here and now, as preferring darkness to light. By it, also, "the natural man as such is an individual". This means we are *all* involved in this disharmony. Man, of himself, seems to be a kind of monster, though only from the point of view of nature, in that "he wills to be an individual simply", something not usually seen as monstrous. Against this there "steps in the law or general

¹¹ Cf. note 7, above.

principle", to which as natural one is "in bondage", since it forbids such individual being, even where the latter has natural inclinations which are benevolent or generally "sympathetic". One feels a Kantian influence here, in at least surface contradiction of Thomism, where the rational is in no wise contradictory of (human) nature. Thus one has a natural inclination to rationality, simply, to ordering all one's "other" inclinations. Yet Hegel says it is the instinctive nature of these tendencies that vitiates them. He surely errs, we want at first to say at least. But must we not look beyond this "the subjective form" allowing "free play to self-seeking and random action"? Must we not look beyond a merely biological realism as disproportionate basis for a soul or reason which "comes from outside"? Are we not all set towards an aristocratic perfection, in short, as condition for not falling into ever greater evils? As Hegel says, it is no good life that is not prepared to put itself on the line, to risk all at some time for the sake of all. Is not, then, the outside here too the inside, as in Hegel's Logic?¹²

Whatever is not of faith is sin, a text declares, meaning that we must believe what we do is right for it to be also good, even where this act of faith is a taking possession of our own instinctive nature, as yet innocent, in a manner not otherwise actuated. This teaching on self-conscious faith is the precise link of historic faith, religion, with trans-historic and yet self-conscious philosophy in the process of absolute spirit. It does not overthrow the immediate teaching (of the Church) that reason is any man's or woman's natural possession and character but absorbs and transcends it as and in transcending abstract individuality in faith's own reception of "the bread of life", so to speak. We thus here to a certain extent transcend our endorsement of André de Muralt's stress upon the primacy of the

¹² Compare and contrast here our *Natural Law Reconsidered*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt, 2002, chapter 14, esp. p. 196. Yet here we are not contradicting the "teaching on the unity of the human person" but transposing that unity one level up, so to say, overcoming the teaching of man as consisting of two composed "parts". The part, Hegel says again, is the whole. So, far from being dualist we surmount the dualist element in the teaching mentioned as a union of two parts. "The Church" and its "teaching", like Hegel and more so, should be and is quite capable of assimilating this speculative development, since it is in fact a greater faithfulness to the Aristotelian doctrine of form and matter in terms of which the fourteenth century Church had declared the soul to be "the form of the body", as itself act, making "the body" to be what it is (Council of Vienne, 1311). Aquinas himself taught and declared, thinking no doubt of the "substance books" VII-IX in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, that this term "body", though discussible in Logic, had no true place in *Metaphysics*.

immediate “moral act” of the essentially finite individual will¹³, mirroring, again, what is written in a recent papal letter to all the faithful on “the Church’s teaching on the unity of soul and body”, of the human person’s “spiritual and biological inclinations... necessary for the pursuit of his end” (*Veritatis splendor* 47, Rome 1993). Our view does not contradict but absorbs and situates the immediacy of this teaching, essentially practical and thus abstract in the Hegelian sense, in contemplation of it in its eternal truth, as is the business of theology, just as this unity is itself the absorption of the “bodily” into the omni-comprehensiveness of absolute knowledge or of spirit, which, “it is the teaching of Christianity” (Hegel), is God¹⁴. Thus we can believe it right to allow this free play de Muralt mentions, to some given extent, and then the free play is no longer free in that first sense. There is a speculative or dialectical broken-backed quality to the reasoning that is needed here too. “All judgments are false”, Hegel declares, as they are always “one-sided”, as is also this one. We must always think the opposite at the same time and not let go of it, as he stresses while giving his at first astonishing view on the identity of good and evil. Or, in consciously affirming our instinctive tendencies, our freedom of play, we free them of their abstractly natural or instinctive quality, which is thus only the “immediate idea” of them, attain the sure-footedness of art or of virtue, for which all is effortless but after long training. Thus all dialectic arrives at the same result of its own windings, free mind, the Idea having no content beside the form, in and as freedom. This is the ground of reconciliation, the harmony of the last and first or of necessary community, in freedom. What is natural or instinctive to us is known in the Idea, “ordering all things”, and it is “our affair”, Hegel says,

¹³ Cf. *Natural Law Reconsidered* (previous note), pp. 67. In fact de Muralt’s argument here simply assumes “the natural attitude” to be *absolutely* normative, though in this case “grace” would no longer substantially “perfect” and transform “nature”, as is claimed pre-eminently in the Catholic tradition there defended. Biological man, philosophy declares, is a phenomenon. Incarnation, incidentally, can be as well stated in these terms as in whatever terms are found truly to apply, since by idealism too “the last Adam became a living spirit”, as he had to, as on the third day “perfected”, whatever the “appearances”.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p.196ff. There I make essentially the same point though without reference to Hegel, concerning natural or “biological” inclinations. The biological, namely, is a finite and hence “momentary” realm (Hegel), as “nature” is but a moment of Spirit as “all in all” (St. Paul). Idealist philosophy is thus the ally of religion and not its enemy, though not as pursuing its activity merely “on sufferance” from the latter, which rather, in its most characteristic pronouncements, endorses mind’s absolute liberty. On this whole question, of form and matter, cf. F. Inciarte’s *Forma Formarum*, Freiburg 1970 (Verlag Karl Alber).

to identify with this absolute perspective in the ways available to us in our situation, cultural or otherwise. Yet such culture itself is but an immediate and in that sense vain appearance, like everything else in its abstractly limited objectivity. Hence philosophy, the art, religion and science of the obvious, which is by no means the abstractly immediate, leaves everything as it is and so, from her hand, "to them that have shall be given".

*

One can say that the Protestant Reformation, essentially a movement of protest within the one community or Church, freed the mind for the truth of the absolute idealist philosophy implicit in all religious teaching, but especially the Biblical, and in the light of which such teaching has to be considered and developed, purified of its first false inasmuch as finite representations, since "God is a spirit and they that worship him shall worship him in spirit and in truth" (*John* 4, 24). Hegel identifies spirit as process, circular and linear in one. The linguistic history of this "shall", therefore, as fusing normative with future, itself exemplifies the essential act and "energy" of that "true reason world" open to and acting upon mind, as itself mind's essence, wherever it is situated, in old or young, cultured or uncultured, though these are categories which mind itself cancels or supersedes. This Reformation therefore includes the "Catholic reformation", at first called counter-reformation, which is still going on and ever goes on as belonging to the essential movement against all spiritual content abstracted from form, against each finite form successively, this being the leading "into all truth" as the inherent dialectic of the then and the now.

This dialectic of highest and lowest, positive and negative, first and last, finite and infinite even, mediate and immediate, universal and individual, abstract and concrete, outside and inside, whole and part, finds supreme expression in the incarnation of absolute spirit in or as one finite individual human nature. This concept, represented as a finite historical event, is thus itself the essential condition for the or its Hegelian reflection as disclosing spirit's true or universal rationality as mind's own eternal self-expression as declared first explicitly in consciously Trinitarian thought, though it is in itself fully expressed in anything whatever and even in nothing when taken as a concept. This thought is revealed in that individual's own person. Such individuality as such, however, or conceptually, it must therefore be kept in mind, is always posited as identical with the universal. Hence we say Christ died "for all men", upon which St. Paul comments, saying "and therefore all died". "For you are

dead and your life is hid with Christ in God". The essentially abstract individual, that is, is "ruined" as notion. This is included, foreknown, in God's becoming "a man" who is thus also "man". Yet the thought-process, that of logic itself here, works both ways. Thus it yields those three syllogisms with which the *Encyclopaedia* ends.

The truth of the content, of Absolute Spirit, Hegel says,

consists not merely in being the substance or the inherent reality of the religious communion; nor again in coming out of this inwardness into the objectivity of imaginative thought; but in becoming concrete actual self, reflecting itself into self, and being *Subject*. (*Phenomenology of Mind*, tr. Baillie, p.764).

This, the element of thought, he adds on the next page, in his next paragraph, "is the process of descending into existence, or individuality" (my stress). The "middle term", between thought (consciousness) and being, "is their synthetic connexion, the consciousness of passing into otherness", i.e. that is what it is, this passing (and return). It is spirit. This connexion, furthermore, basically Hegel's account of the common *copula*, no longer "bare" or "soulless", is itself "the process of imaginative presentation as such". To miss this is to miss all that Hegel has to say about "picture-thinking" and its essential place or "absolute necessity". Yet the final or third stage of spirit as process after consciousness of itself as "pure substance", followed by descent "into existence, or individuality", "is the return from this presentation and from that otherness", is in fact "the element of self-consciousness" itself, just as the Idea with which the Logic ends is logic or mind itself and the true face of that being, "pure substance", with which it began. Being is the passing into otherness, which thus itself, this otherness, thus passes. This is what he call's spirit's "restlessness" and the falsity of all those judgments abstracted as self-standing moments from the Idea. So close is Hegel's logic to his theology.

The "believing mind *sees, feels and hears* this divinity" (*Ibid.* p.757, stress in original). Here Hegel assimilates religion to the Cartesian moment of self-consciousness and that in turn to the Absolute Idea. But what for Descartes was merely the beginning or first condition for systematic science is for Hegel the whole of the latter or the method itself, the ordering act of *nous* which, this act, is yet itself *nous*, God, the Idea, thinking as being. "This is not imagination, not a fancy; it is actual in the believer." Yet the believer "does not start from thought" but "sets out from immediate present existence, and recognises God in it". This is Hegel's account of faith *as* knowledge. To read it as Kantian subjectivity is to misread it, since that is just what it overcomes. "What is called sense-

consciousness is just this pure abstraction; it is the kind of thought for which being is the immediate. The lowest is thus at the same time the highest; the revealed which has come forth entirely to the surface is just therein the deepest reality". Here "the Divine Being is given and exists immediately... This immediate existence ... is *religious* consciousness" and this is why religion, like art, is a form, a still immediate form, of absolute spirit. "This incarnation of the Divine Being, its having essentially and directly the shape of self-consciousness, is the simple content of Absolute Religion", which he later identifies Christianity as. This content is thus philosophy.

There is something in its object concealed from consciousness if the object is for consciousness an "other", or something alien, and if consciousness does not know the object as its self. (p.759; cp. *Enc.* 194 add.)

This is, in fact, the superseding of the object as such by self-consciousness, by the Idea, which, as *Aufhebung*, is a simple stage in dialectical logic, with which that incarnation in the individual which is at once a general elevation to self-consciousness "in" that out-standing or chosen (it is the same) individual is here equated. Mind is always individual, just because it is universal or just in its being universal. Here, though, man passes over to God as self become self-consciousness, to absolute being, but only because absolute being has passed to self-consciousness, in comedy, and this for the same reason, causality yielding dialectically, as in very truth, to reciprocity. The object, finally, yields to the absolute subject, which is absolute subjectivity as God is his godhead in theology, as cognition yields to will, the Good, and both to the Idea, these logical processes being telescoped into the one process of incarnation here, such as is represented in history and thus, at that level, by an historical claim, "actual in the believer". This does not mean the actuality is lost but that this inwardness, actually more an identification, this certainty, is the place of truth, that "the Kingdom of Heaven is within you". "My kingdom is not of this world", yet am I king. This is precisely not that "fantastic extravagance of mind" or "peculiar crazy contortion of consciousness" of which Hegel speaks, since it is rather established by methodical logic, both for us and *in itself*. "For us" is thus the meaning of "in itself", not by our choice but as such. The truth, objective still, is free, self-positing as the concept, the Idea as absolute. It is self-positing and therefore in itself act and purely act, working with no passive or potential material outside of or thus taken to itself. Therefore there is no world independently or properly. This is the "acosmism" Hegel mentions as distinguishing Spinoza's position from

atheism or pantheism also but not, in this respect at least, from his own thought.

This means that the "arrow" of the dialectic, unlike the arrow of time, is not an arrow at all, and this remained or became later Nietzsche's position with regard to time, which, as is not often realised, his thought just thereby supersedes, as time itself returns. If it thus returns, if it does not merely repeat itself, then there is no time. In fact, or in terms of logic, such as "Hegel's logic" claims to be, subject and object, or object and subject, are reconciled or "at oned" in the concept of spirit, which is the Idea. "It is the lesson of Christianity", in its series of moments, as of the Idea itself, "that God is spirit" (Hegel). This making "at one" or knowing the series of moments thus is itself the proper "at-one-ment" for sin of which theology speaks inasmuch as the analysis equates sin or evil with the finite itself, a radicalism to which the Manicheans did not and do not attain. That is their heresy. This atonement therefore is achieved in the chosen or self-electing (it is the same, by the analysis) individual being "made sin", or thus making himself sin, for us or, it is the same, again, by the analysis, assuming finite form, a process only able to be completed by that death, "passage into spirit", proper as inevitable to all that is finite. Thus death and its pain remain the same cruelty as we, in finite mood or mode, call it and such as we see animals suffering. Yet "the sufferings of this present world are *not worthy to be compared* with the glory that shall be revealed in us" (St. Paul: my stress: here too Hegel catches or reflects precisely the Biblical stress and kernel, as needs to be recognised, whatever his own reticence). Can we equate sin with the finite? That we can and must was shown above in our examination of Hegel's analysis of the Garden of Eden story, fundamental to the Christian dogmatic system and even thereby to the scientific and Faustian world-view of today.

This concealment, this secrecy, ceases when the Absolute Being *qua* spirit is object of consciousness. For here in its relation to consciousness the object is in the form of self; i.e. consciousness immediately knows itself there, or is manifest or revealed to itself in the object. (Ph.G. 759)

This exactly corresponds to Augustine's meaning in declaring: "There is one closer to me than I am to myself" or, in the more succinct original, *intimior me mihi*. I suppose not many philosophers today are interested, as they have been in the case of Hegel, in trying to establish that even Augustine's God is only identical in name with that of traditional Christian or Jewish religion or is a mere cover for atheism. "My tears have been my meat day and night, while they daily say unto me, 'Where is thy God?'"

Such texts were meat to him.¹⁵ Again, God is spirit. Augustine could not conceive this for years, he tells us. "As for our God, he is in heaven", the Psalmist continues, "heaven" corresponding exactly, for the nominal atheist McTaggart, to the place or non-place, the focus of the activity of the immortal spirits' (necessarily therefore a plurality) eternal perception of one another, a mutual perception of self in other in benign regress without end ("determining correspondence"), an infinity proper or possible to "persons" alone. These persons, to whom he has reasoned *a priori*, from the necessary truth which is rationality, are in all probability ourselves in our true being or reality, however things may appear immediately or "now", this being an *a posteriori* or "cosmological" inference on his part or on Hegel's, as he considers (*Studies in the Hegelian Cosmology*, CUP 1901, ch.2). This society, namely, this perfect unity, is necessarily the true "cosmos" as rationality itself. Hegel himself continues:

Itself is manifest to itself only in its own certainty of self; the object it has is the self; self, however, is nothing alien and extraneous, but inseparable unity with itself, the *immediately universal*. It is the pure notion, pure thought, or self-existence (being-for-self), which is immediately *being*, and, therewith, being-for-another, and, *qua* this being-for-another, is immediately turned back into itself and is at home with itself (*bei sich*). (Ph.G. 759)

Hegel, not McTaggart, adds:

It is thus the truly and solely revealed. The Good, the Righteous, the Holy, Creator of Heaven and Earth, etc. – all these are predicates of a subject, universal moments, which have their support on this central point, and only *are* when consciousness goes back into thought. (Ph.G. 759)

Thus he had concluded, on the previous page:

In this form of religion the Divine Being is on that account, *revealed*. Its being revealed obviously consists in this, that what it is, is known. It is, however, known just in its being known as spirit, as a Being which is essentially self-conscious.

The "Absolute Being", "the Subject itself", is not known, however, if only these predicates, just mentioned above, are alone what is known, since it is "their ground and essential being", as is worked out in the Logic. For

¹⁵ See also Hegel, *Enc.* 159.

the specific determinations of the universal are not this universal itself. The Subject itself, and consequently this pure universal too, is, however, revealed as self... To be in its notion that which reveals and is revealed – this, then, the true shape of spirit... known as self-consciousness... The divine nature is the same as the human... (*Ibid.* pp.759-760)

Hence God is “first” self-known, “Being is aware of Being”, in the “adopted” shape of self-consciousness as itself *a* self-consciousness, Hegel says here (p.760). As “adoption” signifies free choice, “first” signifies a priority in knowledge and not a temporal change. “Before Abraham was I am”. That is a philosophical affirmation applicable to subjectivity, to self-consciousness as such, which necessarily, therefore, is “an existent object”, Hegel here declares. “This existence”, he continues, “possesses equally directly the significance of pure thought, of Absolute Being... existing as a concrete actual self-consciousness”. Thought and Being here unite, as they do in the Ontological Proof that Hegel often cites in the *Logic* and elsewhere.

Self-evidently, the thought of existence is not denied to thinking in general, of which it is a moment. Hence, again:

What is called sense-consciousness is just this pure abstraction; it is this kind of thought for which being is the immediate. The lowest is thus at the same time the highest; the revealed which has come forth entirely to the surface is just therein the deepest reality. That the Supreme Being is seen, heard etc. as an existent self-consciousness, - this is, in very truth, the culmination and consummation *of its notion* (p.760, my stress).

The “preceding ages” *discover themselves* in this revelation, Hegel writes. The *ages* do this. This means that time itself is rolled up or absorbed in and as this *sacramental* phenomenon, to use a language not Hegel's, as it is in all “pure thought”. The coincidence is complete. Yet while Aquinas, say, had stated that being is characteristically or properly grasped as material or “in motion” by the finite mind Hegel gives the ground for and does not contradict this in saying that here mind “first” itself comes to itself, along, that is to say, with everything else. He thus overcomes the notion of a *finite* mind and the corresponding *natural* dualism assumed in Greek thought, although this had already been accomplished by Aristotle¹⁶ if not by Aquinas in the latter's purely theological writings, where he

¹⁶ See F. Inciarte, “Die Einheit der Aristotelischen Metaphysik” in *Philosophisches Jahrbuch*, 1994, pp.1-21. Inciarte expounds Books 2, 7-9 and 12 as a continuous argument for infinite Mind or God. This is, says Aristotle, using a Greek word, *theologia*.

continues to use representational language in great part, ever conscious of his role and duty as teacher *in actu*.

Rationality, for Hegel, is thus essentially “animal” (as in Aristotle’s definition of man) as this, the animal, is essentially spiritual, as being that revelation which God *is* and which is thus not revelation of anything other than itself. So, too, Aquinas had characterised sense-cognition, *qua* cognition, as a formal or “spiritual” change not explicable in terms of efficient causality merely, while Hegel will show that change itself, as logical “moment” of the Idea, is dialectical, what changes remaining the same just in order to change. This, too, is the necessity of nature as outlined in Hegel’s system. It is a necessity, however, not as binding upon the “Creator of Heaven and Earth” (p. 759) but as revealing, again, the latter’s free self-determination. This is the sense, it follows, of the saying that all things were “made by him” or through (*per*) that self-declaring Word inseparable from thought.

Yet... for Aquinas the free decision of God to create was contained within the very generation of the *Logos* from the Father such that God is, from all eternity, the God of Love who simply *is* a free outward donation (ST I 34, 3 ad 3: “creatures are not known by God through a knowledge taken from creatures, but through his own essence”).¹⁷

This, Millbank comments further, is “the most drastic possible doctrine of synergy”. Nor does it follow that there is a necessity, of an extraneous kind, in thought itself, since the necessity is brought by God’s own will, or the teleological notion (“design”) of the Good, in logic, to the Absolute Idea of thought as pure self-consciousness, which is what thought is or becomes (in thought), rather than that self-consciousness should be or become thought. This is what is missing, is explicitly excluded, in McTaggart’s system, God’s, the Idea’s, choosing to be me, you, Abraham or the “people” of Israel, for that matter, in an identity in difference, rather than their being simply found to be there, in which case the step to the *normativity* of the factual, as Realised End, would be missing. Existence simply is a category, a moment, of thought, of the Idea. For only this is what explains *why* “the factual is normative”. McTaggart cannot derive logically the being of each of us in the unity of a kind of “heavenly host” as Hegel can make good his claim to derive the tri-personal or “syllogistic” Trinity, to identify it as, in its principle, “the absolute

¹⁷ John Millbank: “Why Aquinas is more Byzantine than Palamas”, in *Christianity and Platonism in East and West*, London 2014, pp. 107-160 (Festschrift for Andrew Louth).

person", just as, it follows, "If I did not exist God would not exist" and, just therefore, conversely. Here, in the infinite, freedom and necessity converge. "This truth of necessity, therefore, is *Freedom*" (*Enc.* 158: Hegel's stress¹⁸). It is such, the system, all the same, as what, in its infinity, it could not *otherwise* be, since it would then remain, as pure Object, or in a liberty of indifference, as alien to itself and hence finite. To this infinity, in turn, corresponds universality, which as itself, as not limited, is act or "thought thinking itself as self-thinking". This is Subjectivity as such, expressive of the natural desire or tendency of mind for and to itself as containing all or rather "allness" (Hegel) as surpassing any notion of an extensive, essentially finite aggregate as such. Hence we find the saying, "My God and all things" or the ecstatic "as having nothing", or *in* having nothing, "yet having all things", living though dying, etc. A certain inclusion of nihilism, only identifiable with the Absolute in an error of perspective or as an "ideal" moment of thought, is thus present from the beginning. From this though it follows that, as a moment of "atheism", this moment should not be seen as a break in the tradition, the *cursus*, of revelation's continuous revealing of itself, called God. Atheism is thus essentially theology and not, as some have wished to maintain, theology *only* while it continues to remember the theism of previous times, as in Nietzsche or Sartre, as if it might be otherwise. There is no concept of the negative without recall of the positive.

Everything depends therefore on not seeing this developed insight as "deflationary" but rather as the *enhancement* or trans-figuration of the everyday, of the "picture", of the actual, as the poets have so stressed, as "the great C-major of this life", the treasure sought far off while all the while hidden in one's own back-garden, i.e. hidden, though "in a field" as the Gospel has it, and yet "to hand", in Heidegger's phrase, as his utensils and things are equally, as outward, inward and "subjective". Precisely similarly the one "more intimate than self" of Augustine is that, is thus proportionate to reason, to rational universal self-consciousness, precisely *as* the uttermost transcendent or, in a word, infinite. Only the infinite is infinite, as only the (absolute) Idea is absolute (*Enc.* 213). Thus the greatest man has to be none other than *the* "son of man", merely, not attaining the status of either a particular or universal figure even but become the pure ground or representative of all, of himself nothing, in infinite smallness, as Cusanus had it. Greatness itself, a particular quality, is transcended. This is precisely the Idea which is being as "perfection of

¹⁸ Or at least they are William Wallace's. They seem not to be found in the 1830 German edition (*Hauptwerke*, Band 6, Felix Meiner Verlag, Hamburg, 2015, p.174.

perfections" or "form of forms", seen now as act, *actus essendi*, and not the mere truth, as copula, of a proposition. Rather, it is just as form of forms that "is" come to fulfil this lowly if universal role.¹⁹ In the same way is "sense-consciousness" the highest, the most immediate, as Hegel says, Here God, the highest, heart's and mind's desire in one, is seen and touched. This, further, is the true significance of Freud's discoveries, explicit in Plato, as, in their way, of those of Darwin or Marx, to name three pillars of the modern age. Nature presses forward to self-transcendence from the earliest gene or atom, in "the process of Kind", with its "elective affinities", assumed merely but not explained in most biological theory, though with a necessity escaping Darwin's intelligence, it may seem, while those who have nothing became cast as the Messianic saviours of mankind as a whole, as the part is the true or alone-actual whole, in which or whom all find "salvation" or fulfilment or their own truth, like those self-discovering ages we cited above from Hegel's text here. Love here becomes the cement of an essentially analogous being, the same in its differences, its oppositions, that is to say, of which the two sexes are both instance and figure. Hegel's, therefore, like Plato's, is an *erotic* philosophy. Better, philosophy is the *topos* of at once the birth and exercise of *eros*, the "divine madness" (*Phaedros*)²⁰.

True religion, that is, has no particular role, least of all that of offering sacrifices for the welfare of the state (to whom? to itself?). Rather it is Absolute Spirit itself as conscious of itself as immediately represented in sense, which is sense-*cognition*, the active life of which is Art, Absolute Spirit's first and therefore grounding form, Spirit's own foundational moment, never left behind but affirmed ever more purely and wholly, as is most deeply realised in death, identified by Hegel as the entry into spirit. All that lives must die, that is, as first condition and end of birth. This self-cancellation, therefore, is the ontic transcendence of birth and death in one. Each nullifies the other, neither can be said to come first, as death is rebirth, birth a "fall", to cite this old Origenist representation or moment, "for a moment". Thus it is that philosophy, as final form or ground of Absolute Spirit, must be both the highest religious service and the perfection, unto its disappearance, as abstract individual moment in itself,

¹⁹ Cf. Aquinas, *In I Perihermeneias*, lect. 5, no.22.

²⁰ This, the title of Plato's dialogue, is also, as *Phaedrus*, the title, in English translation, of a study by Joseph Pieper. Pieper showed its central importance for his essentially Thomistic thought in the address he gave at his ninetieth birthday celebrations at Muenster, Germany, in May, 1994, when he chose to speak, out of his multifarious production, on just this *Göttlicher Wahnsinn* (the German title of his book).

of art. Hence we find the divinisation of poetic inspiration or the saying, by Hegel's exact contemporary, that "music is a greater revelation than the whole of religion and philosophy". We come full circle, as we must, in "eternal return" of "things new and old", whereby nothing is other than new as free from chains. That is Hegel's theology, in spiritual transcendence, in purest immediacy, of that immediacy which is life.

*

We have not considered, in any systematic way, Hegel's Trinitarian theology, basic though this is. This, more clearly than anything else, is not so much rooted in as identical with (his) logic. By this, as equally by his whole tripartite system, with which the first originating part, as cause with effect, is identical, logic would not be logic without the free self-othering of the concept, of God, of "the Son". Thus fatherhood is only actual in birth, in generating, of a son, sonship only actual in being thus fathered. Here conception is birth, the one conceiving having no being independently of his concept. There is thus no father prior to, conceptually prior to, the fathered, the self-constituting effect, though there is, Hegel adds, meaning that there has to be, an "earthly" or "real" mother. It is by a similar reasoning that one can tend to regret Hegel's referring to logic as a thinking of God "before" his creation, whether or not the "before" is restricted to a logical priority only. For there is no Father prior to the Son, with whom the creation, as found in and "by" him, is in a measure identified.

We have here the union of existence and being which, as this union, simply is the existence again, which is to say the procession, of spirit. Of course the birth too is procession, but this spiritual procession, this self-constituting proceeding, as its own act, transcending the immobility of substance, has no other name than God himself, the Idea. Trinitarian theologians call spirit gift, *donum*, as itself thus identical with spirit's gifts, which they even enumerate, but there is an element of representation here, necessarily, as of "pictured" thought. That is, it is necessarily representation and such representation is necessary. In the same way Hegel says, again, that existence too is contained in the notion or concept, as the final face, this latter, of precisely being.

Spiritual reality, thought, is thus the final outcome, which means procession, coming out, of that first proceeding in generation and being generated. We might even say, Hegel suggests (in an early work), that spirit is thus sent immediately from the father-actualising son, rather, as the Scripture, for its part, has this son say: "I will send you another". Thus

thought, the Son as word, inward and outward, is not purely or abstractly that time-constituted, ultimately time-constituting, appearance, consideration of which, for us, generates philosophy's own appearing and maturation, "world without end". Time here is lifted above itself from within its very bosom, so to say. Thus

This individual human being, then, which Absolute Being is revealed to be, goes through in its own case as an individual the process found in sense existence. He is the *immediately* present God; in consequence, his being passes over into His *having been*. Consciousness, for which God is thus sensuously present, ceases to see Him, to hear Him: it *has* seen Him, it *has* heard Him. And it is because it only *has* seen and heard Him, that it first becomes itself spiritual consciousness; or, in other words, He has now arisen in Spirit, as He formerly rose before consciousness as an object existing in the sphere of sense. For, a consciousness which sees and hears Him by sense, is one which is itself merely an immediate consciousness, which has not cancelled and transcended the disparateness of objectivity, has not withdrawn it into pure thought, but knows this objectively presented individual, and not itself, as spirit (*Phenomenology of Mind*, tr. Baillie, p. 762-3).

The key-phrase here is this "and not itself".

In the disappearance of the immediate existence of what is known to be Absolute Being, immediacy acquires its negative moment. Spirit remains the immediate self of actual reality, but in the form of the universal self-consciousness of a religious communion...

Of this each member carries the whole communion, Hegel seems to say, in simple accordance with traditional thought on the topic. Yet this form of common life, typically sharing in a pictorial presentation,

is not yet the self-consciousness of spirit which has reached its notion as notion; the mediating process is still incomplete. In this connexion of being and thought, then, there is a defect; spiritual life is still cumbered with an unreconciled diremption into a "here" and a "beyond".

Consciousness must needs pass from intuitive apprehension to conceptual comprehension "of the absolute Substance" and we may assume that the members of the communion, the congregation at worship, typically, are all at various stages of or have completed this passing, the one-time or, hence, phenomenal Professor Hegel, for one, along with his predecessors and latterday successors, being found among them, helping them along and in turn helped, in this or that way, by them. The community, in fact,

conceptually or philosophically considered, takes on the outline of what is called in religion "the communion of saints", itself the necessary as mediating pictorial representation of the unity which is the concept itself as act or final entelechy, "I in them and they in me", life saved as lost, says Hegel in effect, in, conceptually "ruined individuality", "ruin" being a figure for that mediated conception, the mediator being self-consciousness ("I am he"), the particularity of which "expires in its universality, i.e. in its *knowledge*, which is essential Being reconciling itself with itself" (*Ibid.* p.781 and f.). By this "spiritualization" (death) Divine Being "is affirmed as a self", "the pure certainty of itself" as "universal self-consciousness". Hegel's account, his philosophy of religion revealed, does not stop short of the Pentecostal. Nor could it have done since, of necessity, "spirit is Spirit knowing its own self" and not some miasma; "its figurative idea is the true absolute content", not separable from this movement of self-revelation as, namely, "revelation itself". This, and nothing finite, is what Hegel means by "subjective certainty", forgiving evil as arising therefrom specifically toward "absolute explicit self-existence", to self-knowledge as "absolute source" (Merleau-Ponty). "Before Abraham was I am", while "where I am, there shall you be". In the self-styled Son of Man it is man himself that speaks, as man, spirit, has ever spoken in all as constituting "the true reason-world", as equally in all events as themselves (necessary) figures, word, of truth. Self alone is event as absorbing it.

*

It follows that the mother, as necessary, must either be a fourth Trinitarian person or one with the son begotten of the father "before all worlds" yet, just as such, necessarily *appearing* "in time" or simply appearing, that is to say, or revealed. As such she becomes identified as *co-redemptrix* and is even, as such pictorial thought, which is nonetheless thought, goes on at times to speculate, received (and therefore consumed) in the eucharistic meal. Theological problems arise if solely she is thus identified with her son, and in fact it is quite routinely affirmed that in communion we receive, are united to, one another as, in receiving, all receive together, as borne up by one another, bearing "one another's burdens". *Sumit unus sumit mille*. "Now you (all) are the body of Christ".

Such problems the community has resolved in those teachings typified in doctrines or dogmas of special privileges of the woman in the case, her "immaculate" conception or her "physical" ascension, by passive "assumption" (it is the same) into spiritual reality or "heaven". The illiterate visionary of Lourdes hears her, or the vision, which is itself ever

the conception, the Idea, saying: "*I am* the immaculate conception", as Hegel himself might have said but not only of the woman, of this "neck" of the Church joining head to body. The two processions, the Trinitarian one and that of creation, interior and exterior, merge in conception, again, and Mary thus becomes, first, the exemplary type of this of which her son is the upholding form. She is as a neck, again, between head and body or "members". But in the proper, de-pictured notion there is no place for a neck. Nor is this any improvement upon or, contrariwise, distortion of the Gospel: "that they all may be one in us as you and I, father, are one... they in me and I in them". Mary, Eve and woman in general or, it is the same, eternally point the way to true knowledge, "draws us on" (Goethe: *zieht uns an*).

That tricky suffix, *-trix*, its emphatic employment, is a conscious stress on a second sex, as we say. Adam would not be Adam without Eve, who gives him the plucked fruit Hegel mentions as herself "a kindly fate". Fate is here (pp.753-4) repeatedly mentioned. The fruit, works of art, thus made here essential to spiritual development, now become, and we should note the phrasing, in themselves "just what they are for us" once "broken off the tree", or abstracted from the one unitive reality of nature, of tree and garden. Of woman, the woman, maiden, it is said: "in a higher way she gathers all this together into the light of her self-conscious eye". The English has "she" but in German *das Magd* could be expected to be *es*, "it".

Woman, we might thus say, belongs to the Concept as does existence. She is this necessary and yet kindly, even "immaculate" conception. But man, as self-conscious, *der Mensch*, as the Idea necessarily "incarnate" or immediately revealed, is not to be thus sexually divided, or only so as to be more perfectly, less abstractly, one, concrete. Each, man or woman, projects the other as self, rather, especially in that state of comedy Hegel now idealises, so to say. For man woman is "that ironical being" (Hegel), as woman sees herself as completed in, with and by man. The two cases are not the same, as Self and Absolute Being are not the same, and yet they are, by mutual and hence annihilating absorption. Nietzsche, in saying woman is for man's play, is thus far in harmony with the Scriptural rendering of Wisdom playing, reciprocally, before the throne of God, as divinity herself in other words. Man though is not woman's play. She waits for him to discover her and make her what she is, to give her children of her own or fruits that she then gives him, though here too the last is always, and in an especial way, first as first and last are one, concretely again.

The point is that this, woman, her existence, must be included in the concept as the play of sex, which is a knowing, of self in other, as play is wisdom and proof of mind, *homo ludens*, is the generating *in* and by fecundating love. This conception can be maintained through the various controlled varieties of artificial fecundation, as it is called, since none of this belongs to the concept except as “existence is contained in the concept” or as the phenomenon is as such itself a *noumenon*, as word is concept and even picture-idea. The concept, that is, is first conceived in art as picturing its conceiving, before through religion growing up to its full stature in philosophy, where its essential content becomes itself its form. This though is why every woman has the soul of a man while man finds himself in woman, while as each thus finds himself in his or her other, so each, having become the other, is no longer confronted by it but truly self-conscious. Here lies also the rationale for notions of the transcendence of marriage “in heaven” inseparable from the tradition, which yet explains it in terms of the one marriage, of thought and being, heaven and earth, which is itself heaven, able to include even this, as also thought’s or being’s own death, in its or *the* Concept. For the individual, therefore, himself “ruined”, it matters little whether he finds himself as man or as woman. An actor is an actor, whatever part he has to play. He may play a different one tomorrow, or two or more at once, as God attributes to himself, in Scripture, the maternal virtues equally.

It would also follow from the above that the final character of erotic self-exceeding, in whatever circumstances, is perfected in self-consciousness, which is thus ec-static. Talk of selfishness or otherwise here is therefore meaningless or out of metaphysical context, just as Hegel argues that good and evil are at bottom the same and, further, that conscience is wickedness. Societal forms miss the notion altogether, and it them. Thus in the unity of the communion Hegel mentions, “the individual along with the consciousness of the communion” is “the complete whole of the individual spirit” (p.763). Each is all as God, finally, the Idea, is “all in all”.

As this complete whole it, anyone, “knows itself... as spirit”. What follows from this, however, is the impossibility of being anyone at all, since each such a one is everyone. That is self-consciousness, for which “all things are yours”. And these are the worshippers “the father seeks”, as being “revelation itself”, finding here alone its *raison d’être* for “creation”, in excess and not need. Infinity too is fulfilled in exceeding self. Being, that is, is erotic and just thereby *agapetic*. We are back at the lowest which “is at the same time the highest”, this being only “what is called” sense-

consciousness. Or, universal ego itself becomes universal egolessness.²¹ This is “the philosophical” or transcendent ego for no other reason than that it is the real or authentic ego, just as, again, the Christ of faith, Hegel means, is the real or authentic Christ. To just bracket these off as “the mystical” in the sense of that of which “one cannot speak” is or can seem irresponsible²². It would deny or forbid the whole lived experience and significance of Israel, ancient, medieval or modern. Nonetheless one cannot speak of it, except in a hieroglyph of the actual form of things, as “word”. Hieroglyphics, in fact, is first the original picture-language of which Hegel speaks. In and through it one sees without seeing the objects and events of finite life, of the “idea immediate”. One does not see the picture, unless in a “second intention”, through which a second, more interior picture (of the hieroglyph) is employed. Only this not-seeing can account for how the “picture” of a bull gradually becomes the *alpha*, a symbol through which nothing is seen because it is itself seen through in reading or hearing the word, which is also “seen through” in the judgment or proposition as not itself even the final unit of meaning. “All judgments are false”, Hegel insists, this judgment itself being false unless and until at once taken up and put by within the whole system. In that sense this is after all the mystical of which “one cannot speak”, only allowing it to speak itself. “Being is letting being be” (Heidegger). “God has spoken only one word” (John of the Cross, recommending silence).

*

This is the final transformation of intentional consciousness, even as self-consciousness, into “absolute knowledge”, the Idea knowing itself, though this is no longer knowledge as we normally think it. Rather, we think knowledge for the first time and it can only be what is described here or in similar texts (Hegel cites Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*). The transition is described in the final paragraph of the penultimate chapter, from which I have been quoting here, and the first following paragraph of the next, concluding chapter of *The Phenomenology of Mind*.

These texts, and related passages in *The Philosophy of Spirit*, are crucial for settling the dispute between those who see religion as here eclipsed by philosophy and those seeing the latter as the perfection or

²¹ Cp. Axel Randrup, “Idealist Philosophy: What is Real?” CIRIP, at <http://philsci-archive.pitt.edu/archive/00001216/01/reality.html>.

²² Cp., as at least suggestive of such a verdict, the sociologist Sten Andersson’s mammoth study, *Filosofen som inte ville tala* (the philosopher who refused or didn’t want to speak), Norstedts, Stockholm 2012.

intrinsic destiny, as if in "heaven", of religion and hence, too, of art. The three forms, which yet, as three, form a unity of absolute spirit are ever to be retained, though in their hierarchical order. By art spirit is first present and absolutely so in the immediacy of the phenomenal, of sense in all its non-being, as a sleeper's self-reminding of his waking state to which he must return. Without art he would forget it entirely. It is thus necessary for life as, precisely, the *immediate* Idea and only that. In this respect art, even as a form, is also a "moment" of spirit absolute, identical with it in difference but of itself ideal, nothing real, not "the substance". The art of Kafka itself remains within the oppressively low-ceilinged dream it depicts. Finally this is true also of the existing philosophical writings, the manuscripts or texts, of Hegel, as not yet the final form of absolute spirit, not yet *sophia* but *philo-sophia*, the distinction he wished his work, his contemplation (*nous*), to transcend, thus putting by in retaining this work, however, while retaining, in difference, the contemplation as absolute knowledge or no longer his property, "his" or "he", abstractly viewed, having yielded to "ruin", having "entered into spirit" or "become what one is", the genuine sole self of selflessness, "absolute knowledge", in which all participate, as that bull become *alpha* and hence *omega* or its other. In accordance with this view, resisted by the objectivist understanding, Hegel is not apprehended or transmitted unless by writing, discoursing or thinking like and finally *as* Hegel. This is but the old Greek insight that one must become what one understands or know nothing but one's self, there being nothing "else" to know. This is the self-thinking Idea, essentially or in its own concept filling all things as itself plenitude containing what it fills. The quantitative notion of filling up is here *aufgehoben*.

Or, we might equally say, art and religion, though necessary for life, are not, as is philosophy as *sophia* or wisdom, eternally or absolutely necessary. There, as in the *vita contemplativa* in its own intention as expounded by Augustine, Aquinas or their successors, religion is perfected as *Gottesdienst* (Hegel) in "the philosophical act" (Joseph Pieper). There is no temple there, again, other than the contemplative person himself, the loving person, Hegel would rather say, become himself or herself the beloved. The essential opposition, surviving even in Hegelian self-consciousness, is overcome, while this self, itself also and just therefore not-self, itself replaces the sun of this life for one and all. The kingdom there, the "state", is within.

Such wisdom, however, is not and cannot be, again, what mind in its state of finitude has handed down to us in writings or other records of the past, as art in its fullness too is not found in bricks or pigments or

instrumental vibrations, these being mere aftershocks and less than so of the eternal motion, the vibrating of spirit itself. For those who invented writing would then have to be said to have invented philosophy herself, as some people assume it has been thought up within universities. The final community, however, we noted, is within, in the properly negative sense of not being found without. This must be born in mind when Hegel says spirit, God, is known in its or his community (*Enc.* 554).

Here in the *Phenomenology* (Baillie, p.784) he refers to “the universal divine man, the spiritual communion”, the communion of the spirit, that is to say. This expression does not refer exclusively or even primarily to some collection of worshippers gathered of a Sunday morning in Berlin in the early nineteenth century, or in Rome or Seville at some other time, to pray, hear the word(s) of scripture or preacher and enjoy the feel of their best clothes, nor to any other such phenomenal assembly, of which philosophy as such knows and sees nothing, since these phenomena *are* nothing. Religion itself speaks of all becoming one perfect man “in Christ”. This therefore must enter into and further elucidate the idea of the religious community, contained in the infinite notion itself or in absolute self-knowledge. God is known and only known “in his community”, as Hegel writes, though asserting in general also that this or any community or anything at all is only known in God. “There is a time when God dwells in the soul and there is a time when the soul dwells in God”, wrote de Caussade around 1700, a text Hegel may well have known (*Self-Abandonment to Divine Providence*, English translation from the French, edited and introduced by Dom David Knowles, Collins, Fontana Paperbacks, London).

If we now return to Hegel's text (*Phenomenology of Mind*, p.784, Baillie translation) we find, again, that he talks of “the unity of Essential Being and Self” as no sooner conceived than actual “inherently”. As Hobbes had said of the joy of heaven - it is “no sooner known than enjoyed”. Either these expressions cut both ways or the two ways are one way. This is the ground for the evangelical saying: “To him that has shall be given”, given that which he already has, namely, or, equivalently, there is no such future and this alone is “the future of Hegel” (book by Catherine Malabou). Consciousness accordingly wishes to see its own self thus “reconciled”. As if simply it were itself this other self, or this essential being. This though is “an imaginative idea” only, as such “externally” attached to its “pure negativity”. For the *cogito* gets no further than itself, this being the constant realist objection to idealism, from which the Anselmist solutions of early modern philosophy do not free it, as Aquinas had noted in advance that they would not. For not everyone has the idea in

question, that of God as infinite perfection, which thus remains hypothetical. For this very reason one proceeds to "the opposition of a beyond" instead of denying or renouncing the finite at its root. Consciousness, that is, to which the "spiritual communion" remains attached, since it can think no other, thus hangs suspended between a past or distantly achieved reconciliation, no longer present, and consciousness of full reconciliation only in a far off future, the anticipation of which is called faith, a feeling of love²³ for what it does not behold, or which is not itself beheld "in its consciousness as an actual immediate object". This is necessarily the case, inasmuch as the *object* of consciousness is, necessarily, mediated by this consciousness. Its immediacy would be consciousness's realisation of itself as absolute, as "self"-consciousness, cancelling an essentially finite objectivity, *Gegenständlichkeit*, as such. But this is not realised by such consciousness, is not distinctly conceived, though it be "felt in its heart". A dualism thus arises between the then and the not yet, which is in fact time itself, real insofar or, rather, "as long as" (Hegel) spirit needs it, since it, time, is in fact a negative enchainment.

Such knowledge has not yet "the form and shape of spiritual reality". Immediate consciousness is separated from "religious consciousness" *in its finite form*, however. Mysticism, of which philosophy is a form as the former is a form of philosophy, fulfils and delivers religion from this finite imperfection while remaining a religious development. This is why Hegel calls Christianity, in seeming contradiction of his own system, "the absolute religion", as he might similarly speak of an absolute *art* or beauty, the lesson of which, i.e. of the former, is that "God is spirit" (*Geist*). Thus religion itself declares that these two "modes of consciousness" are not separated, however things may be "felt" to be. It attains, *in philosophy*, as in mysticism or prayer, to true and indeed, as the universality of ego, consequent ego-less self-consciousness, which is thus pure consciousness equally of otherness, self and other being as identical with one another in their difference as Hegel finds good and evil to be. What is thus implicit has yet to become, as what it truly is and as indeed being at all, "an equally absolute explicit self-existence", the goal of philosophy in "absolute knowledge".

It is pointless, in view of Hegel's general plenitude of pronouncements, to quibble about philosophy's purity, which the religious communion is on the road towards explicitly acknowledging as the meaning of its own system. There are not two systems, nor could there be. What is first pictured is then beheld "face to face" (as but one face). This is itself the

²³ For thinking as love, see *Enc.* 159.

essence of representation, after all. The Second Coming is the truth of the first coming as this latter is the truth of its self. That is the eclipse, the transfiguration, of our figured future. For, as Hegel states in introducing his final chapter:

The Spirit manifested in revealed religion has not as yet surmounted its attitude of consciousness as such; or, what is the same thing, its actual self-consciousness is not at this stage the object it is aware of.

Hegel's ultimate thesis can be said to be that absolute knowledge, or truth, is itself the self-conscious certainty of *faith*. In religion "truth, the content, is not yet at one with its certainty. This identification, however, *is secured* when the content has received the shape of self" (p.798, my stress). Given absolute idealism, along with Hegel's account of self-consciousness, transcending all forms of psychologism, this must be the outcome and it shows us how close Hegel was to those notions of Jacobi's from which he was at such pains to distinguish himself in the section on "attitudes to objectivity" appended as a kind of prologue to the *Logic of the Encyclopaedia*. In this exaltation of faith as the final form of knowledge his thought, his system, is the *facit* of all previous theology, not scorning the "blessed assurance" in which the need for it originates and which is now revealed as the philosophical eros brought to its completion in the transcendence of itself.

We, however, two clear centuries after this breakthrough, must carry and have carried things forward "as actual History", transforming the Substance, as Hegel now calls this certainty and truth combined, into Subject as, the latter, showing itself to be Spirit (though the reverse identification holds equally). Spirit, though, as substance, "inherently completes itself, completes itself as a world-spirit", no longer merely as self-conscious spirit. This is the development of religion itself, its content, into "philosophical science", he says, which "alone is the perfect form in which spirit truly knows itself". This English word "science" (*Wissenschaft*) ought not to mislead anyone into seeing spirit's gnoseological perfection as a prescribed classroom exercise. Life itself, Hegel says elsewhere, has to be put on the line, risked, as in inward readiness, *secundum praeparationem animae*²⁴. We can here recall Socrates' contempt for the non-lover, paralleling Paul's renowned panegyric on charity, in *Phaedrus*. We read that one is embarked, to repeat, on a kind of "divine madness", which, as divine or absolute, is final sanity, the narrow road of careful aristocratic

²⁴ A phrase used repeatedly by Augustine in commenting on the "Sermon on the Mount" of *Matthew* 5-7.

distinction, unremittingly striving towards that final end of all and of any action whatever. Only this, in fact, can protect and preserve the democratic ideal itself. All this is and has been achieved by "the religious communion" in its "actual History", Hegel declares (pp.801-2), with *sophia*, wisdom, reckoned as the and a "gift of the spirit", as the latter's inheritor. The Pauline distinction between two wisdoms, from above and from below, grace and nature, was never meant as an abstract separation, it being grace itself that "perfects nature" (Thomas Aquinas) towards its own proper being, as inherently essential, therefore, to the latter or, in Hegelian terms, identical with the Idea in its difference from it.

This certainty thus appears as itself "resurrection" from the dead. "Trust in God! I will praise him still – my saviour and my God", we find in a Psalm "of David", echoing or being echoed by the final affirmations of *Job*. Eschatological faith, accordingly, as illustrating this, is apostolically declared "vain" without it, without resurrection-certainty, as philosophy here confirms, life itself being "only the idea immediate" in the first place. Resurrection is not itself an event since, Hegel's Logic demonstrates, events are in themselves abstractly finite conceptions, participant merely in Act as final actuality. That was the limitation of the Judaic intra-testamentary *apocalyptic*, not to see this. We understand, though, in today's actuality, somewhat more about this historical and contingent phase of Judaism than was known in Hegel's (contingent) day. This can help us clear up some of the residual obscurities or unanswered questions in his account of the mediation, through contingent events, of and by "the Divine Man" (p.780), though one and all such events are necessary in themselves as moments of the Idea. The contingent has its necessary place in the system of systems, in thought. Contingency is thus an abstract bestowal by our own selves, by the understanding, upon such *moments* of the Idea. In that respect every contingency, primarily contingency itself, becomes necessary as included in, through an identity in difference with, the Idea, as a necessary moment of this inasmuch as freely assumed or determined, this being the general sense of any particular sociomorphic notion of divine decrees and the like.²⁵

By Jewish apocalyptic of these later times, themselves fixed as being such, a Son of Man or, rather, one "like unto a Son of Man", was being stored up in the heavens as personification of the wrath of God, ready to be launched on to the world, it was thought, though by a reckoning made itself contingent as reckoning from contingent events, quite soon. This notion, or set of notions, was eventually tempered by the reflection,

²⁵ Cf. the text quoted from Milbank above.

learned from the *Book of Psalms* or elsewhere, that “with the Lord a day is as a thousand years”²⁶. Before this, however, the relative or immediate immanence of this “Day of the Lord” (*dies irae*) was announced in a special way by John the Baptist, of whom Jesus was first a disciple, John himself being seen as in function one with Elijah returning. After John’s murder Jesus felt himself called to take up his mantle, as once Elisha Elijah’s. He gradually came, perhaps, to identify himself with that *angelic* being, as conceived, say, by the prophet Daniel, to be “like unto” a Son of Man. He thus entitled himself *the* Son of Man. So the evangelists, one or more of them, themselves make this identification, of two distinct notions, that of the one kept in the heavens and that of man as such, in concrete universality as Hegel would put it. Hence John, writing later than the first Christian generation, has Pilate say: “Behold the man”. *Ecce homo!* There is conscious echo²⁷ here, whether or not an actual governor actually said it, of the prophet’s pointing to the guilty King David and saying: “Thou art the man”. We have an archaic English usage in both cases, as we have come to know the texts, harmonising in any case with the “Pauline” declaration that here Jesus the Christ, as he came to be acknowledged as, “was made sin for us”.

A further facet of this Jewish speculation was the belief, apparently shared by Jesus, in *general* “resurrection of the dead” (as expressed at *John* 5: 28-29, recalling *Daniel* 12, 2), all of them, though “resurrection” is itself a figurative term²⁸, as demanded by God’s justice, resurrection, namely, of those no longer living “when the Son of Man comes”, that angelic being or figure *like to* a son of man²⁹. In the New Testament

²⁶ Cf. *II Peter*, 3, 8.

²⁷ Cp. Paul Trudinger: “St John: a Subtle Sacramentalist”, *The Downside Review*, January 2001, pp. 1-10.

²⁸ Figurative at least as of part for the whole since, first, not all the dead (not Jesus, for one) lay under the earth, so as to “rise up”. Second, it was not to be conceived, even by pre-Christian Jews, as mere re-vival to a former life and is in fact, as Christianity was to develop it, essentially spiritual. “It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body” (St. Paul). Thus even in the text cited above the word is of a dual resurrection, *of* life or of judgment in descriptive genitive, *anastasin zoes... kriseos*. Yet “resurrection” gets increasingly assimilated to its spiritual interpretation as of the first of these two or as “to new life”, this phrase “new life” later becoming the title of Dante’s seminal prose work, written before the fulfilment of its promise in *The Divine Comedy*, concerning a life of love and worship.

²⁹ In the Johannine text the expressions “Son of Man” and “Son of God” are used interchangeably, already more expressly in the Latin than in the original Greek

records resurrection, as distinct from Christ's "exaltation" (this distinction grounds the components of the annual fifty day liturgical Easter cycle), was never preached as a special *miracle* uniquely attributable to Jesus, in view, say, of his sacrifice, he having interpreted events as requiring that he freely thus offer himself. His resurrection was always the "first fruits" of "them that slept", of the order of things, namely. As such it is the Lord's Day, as we still call Sunday, on occasion at least. In Matthew's narrative, anyhow, some others do rise again after the death of Jesus and appear to people on the streets.³⁰

Hence these are "the last days", between the first and the second "comings" of Jesus, of the Son of Man, which are yet one, as faith and its liturgy, along with the rite of baptism "into his death" (and resurrection), enact. By this, all the same, it is quite conceivable that Jesus, in declaring at his trial before the Sanhedrin: "You shall see the Son of Man coming in his glory", i.e. in your lifetime, as is clearly meant also in the other Gospel proclamations of this event "to come", was not then consciously or at least unambiguously referring to himself, though faith refers it to him. Hence the developing *doctrine* of faith will increasingly refer this "second" coming to that of the Spirit at the next Pentecostal feast-day, as no longer materially second in number, thus eliminating or at first reducing that gap between common life and transfiguration by which Hegel distinguishes abstractly religious consciousness from the transcendence of consciousness as such (even of "self-consciousness"): "whether we live or die we are the Lord's". Life, as only the "idea immediate", ought itself to disappear also from Hegel's discourse. But then the discourse itself would be superseded or "taken up", as would the German language, composite language as such and other such momentary phenomena.

text. Thus in verse 28 (of *John* 5) we have *Filii Dei* translating *autou* despite this referring back to *huios anthropou* only.

³⁰ *Matthew* 27, vv.52-53. In fact they are "put" there as having arisen at the very moment of the death of Jesus, when he "sent forth his spirit" (v.50) and "the earth was moved", though they only "came into the holy city and appeared unto many" "after his resurrection". For Hegel, writing later, death itself is "the entry into spirit", as here in representation, but really achieved, as St. Paul, referring, before Matthew wrote, to an earlier narrative, says: "Now these things *happened in a figure*" (*Galatians* 4:24, in an "inspired" translation of the original *hatina estin allegoroumena*, going beyond even the Vulgate's *per allegoriam dicta* but corresponding perfectly to Hegel's account of contingent or finite things. The question of the "historical reality", so far as religion or spiritual truth, inclusive of philosophy, is concerned, is a non-question. Nor is this "modernism" in any intelligent sense of the term.

Meanwhile we have the *creeds*, as they are called (from *credo*, “I believe”³¹, as each member of any congregation first intones when saying or singing them, Apostolic or Nicene), whereby we declare that Christ “descended into Hell” or “shall come again”. We ought to bear in mind, however, that these statements, inasmuch as they have a temporal component, are representations only of eternal truth, that first and constitutive object of remembrance. Faith, that is, first gets expressed in a pre-philosophical or pre-theological mode having, just therefore, in this first, not yet perfect mode, only a relative normative force in relation to the spiritual reality it represents in mediating it and mediates it, we should not forget, in representing it. The word “spiritual” here designates without separation both the metaphysical and the mystical or trans-metaphysical core of things, metaphysics inherently transcending itself towards the mystical and only thus escaping self-contradiction in performance.

By these fruits of Biblical exegesis the contingent nature (Hegel's *gemeinten Gestalt*) of the “historical” Jesus, the ideas of his time and place providing the material for his mind and so on, are brought more to the forefront of our awareness, though Hegel's treatment, prepared by his Logic, uncannily anticipates the future development. By this exegesis it was Jesus who chose submission to the cross, hoping thereby not so much to “force God's hand” as himself to be making or discovering the divine decision, since he could see no other way. At a certain point, hanging there in agony, if not before, he must have realised that he would actually die without last-minute divine intervention, if this were anyhow ever in question, even though Elijah, say, had been “taken up” into the fiery chariot without dying. Thus, to hypothesise merely, he cried out, citing the opening words of the twenty-first Psalm, his question: “Why have you forsaken me?” This Psalm, though, ends on a note of redemption and hope, as is often pointed out. It does not exactly follow, then, though there be some truth at least in Schweitzer's grim words, that Jesus “died a deluded apocalyptic”.³² His thought, like everyone else's, would have

³¹ Hence we had the negative reaction of such believers to the recent English mistranslation of “*we believe*” for the credal singular. Faith would unite, rather, with absolute subjectivity.

³² For the exegesis here I have followed work by some of today's representative Biblical scholars. See Paul Trudinger: “Real Messianism”, *The Downside Review*, October 2005, or Laurent Guyénot: “Jesus as Elijah's Apostle”, *ibid.* October 2003. It is not without significance, when evaluating Hegel as a Christian theologian, that the Benedictine monks of historic Downside Abbey, England, did not hesitate to publish this material, harmonising as it does with his philosophical system in particular.

developed, also or especially in those final hours. I say this without prejudice to the metaphysically defined divine omniscience “in the heaven of his soul” (J. Maritain), to “absolute knowledge”, shared though, it might seem, by all those who are “in Christ”, who *are*, therefore, Christ, as “living in God”, moments of the Idea. Thus McTaggart argued that only persons are capable of being such moments, concurring there in Hegel's declared view that such things as the particulars of individual gnats in an ephemeral swarm are not material for divine or absolute knowledge (McTaggart was formally atheist), are not therefore knowable in themselves at all. “Now you are the body of Christ”, it was declared quite quickly to all persons getting involved in the new movement. That is, as we might add, only persons can remain what they are in becoming what they are not. “How can the gods see us face to face until we have faces”, exclaims the main character in C.S. Lewis's novel, *Till We Have Faces*, a tribute to Hegelianism despite his protests. Thus we may concur with that last Apostle, “born late in time”: “Even should we have known Christ after the flesh (as did that last Apostle's colleagues) yet we know him so no more”.

Religion is associated, in Hegel's lectures on the philosophy of religion, with the overcoming of *Schmerz*, in the world and/or in the soul. It identifies this final end with happiness, *beatitudo*. Hegel identifies this, however (as at *Enc.* 159), as not essentially different from free spirit, from liberation to an absolute subjectivity, from the act of “thinking necessity”. As absolute this subjectivity might be said, after all, to transcend “the euphoric moment”³³ of religion in what is equally an absolute calm, if we are to consider feelings, or a perpetual motion which is in no way a *perpetuum mobile* but rather a dance returning continuously or as such, and not merely discretely, upon itself as, therefore, standing still. It is thus the identity, and no mere synthesis, of motion and rest, since motion by itself or abstractly taken, motion *as* motion, is *imperfect* act, as Aristotelian penetratingly defines it. This necessity of the infinite and/or absolute, which “thinks itself” and nothing, which is to say everything, else is equivalent to “absolute knowledge” or *being*, one as absolute or pure *act*, thus knowing itself in the form of knowledge, self-thinking, we might say, again, while we retain awareness that these are finite terms whereby we try to say, beyond mere *meaning* (*Enc.* 20), what “cannot be said”, as silence is only enjoined by speech.

*

³³ I owe my acquaintance with this expression to Beat Gruyter of the Yahoo Hegel group. To that group in general I owe a great deal more.

We have not dealt here systematically, if that is the word, with the question as to why God made the world, the question for want of an answer to which D.T. Suzuki, philosopher, monk of and authority on Zen, tells us, he, Suzuki, felt unable to “become a Christian”. In Hegel’s thought, by contrast, this question is essentially bound up with the historical Trinitarian conception of God, itself only to be delivered from imaginative representations courting the danger of tri-theism, by philosophical or, hence, in Aristotle’s sense, truly scientific theological analysis. Implied here is an overcoming of the dualist model hitherto developed from a particular reading of the Pauline dialectic. Due to his rabbinical realist presuppositions Paul opposed divine foolishness, as inverting all things by the Christian preaching, to human wisdom, calling such foolishness “the wisdom from above” as in a first opposition of grace and nature. As Patristic and Greek culture developed among the Christians they went on to deduce, erroneously as it seems, an actual acquaintance, in the historical arena, with the sacred Jewish tradition as the only way of explaining the manifest Greek wisdom of Plato or Aristotle, to which, therefore, even the pagan Plotinus, working side by side with Origen, would be heir. Conversely, Porphyry, also pagan, declared the Jews to be “a nation of philosophers”, an esoteric nation and hence “elect” indeed, one might interpret. This dialectic persists in the assumption by the visible Catholic Christian community on earth today of a determinative or leading role in their recent official endorsement of “the ecumenical movement”, founded, all the same, from a Protestant source. This visible community, therefore, by Hegel’s philosophy necessarily a whole in the part, like any personalised and hence phenomenal mind, having truth only in the Idea’s assimilation of it, merely “stands for” or signifies the new humanity *in* “the second Adam” or “Divine Man” as true and entire “body of Christ”, comprising the living and the dead, the “others”, indifferently, this being the entire “bond of charity” (Aquinas). Since the individual is anyhow abstract and hence “ruined” by this thought we cannot know who specifically or, alternatively, in what sense all might be included in it, that being representational thinking in any collective acceptance of “all”, overcome, however, by the simple *everyday* term “every”, *omnis* in the singular, as is that other representation of a dividing line, of church and non-church, so to say, running through each person as “ideally” separating good from evil. In this way the defined exclusive formula, *extra ecclesia nulla salus*, becomes perfected as inverted into a universalist meaning (of *ecclesia*, namely), the notion of salvation, with its roots in the apocalyptic, finding its “scientific” form in thinking self-consciousness as including the “moments” of blessedness, love, consciousness again or, finally, absolute

knowledge³⁴. “This is eternal life, to know God” (“and Jesus Christ whom he has sent”, it is added, thus characterising the statement as not literally but, rather, narratively, put as spoken by an historical, still living Jesus). Philosophically, therefore, we can question the extent to which we, all of us, as it were self-evidently, “know what we are” though not what we “shall be” (as in the antithesis of *I John*). The “future of Hegel”, the future for Hegel, is a false because finite notion as is also, therefore, the ever unstable “now” set up by it.

In considering the figure of God “making” the world, in Hegel's thought, we shall encounter a persistent identity of cause and effect as was established in his Logic. The world is, of necessity, God himself in self-alienation and hence, on its own, nothing, an abstraction if taken apart from its role as process of God's, the Idea's, self-constitutive act or form, necessary to the very concept of infinity as itself being, therefore, neither derivative nor, impossibly, absolute contingency, as of an exploding bomb first planted no one knows how. This is in fact the self-destructing proof of necessity *from* (an assumed) contingency. In Hegel's logic the possible *is* the necessary as first form of the actual, the celebrated proof being nothing more specific than this.

As necessarily Act the infinite generates, originates ultimately itself, as its “word” only thus being infinite, “begotten not made” in theology's revealing specification of sonship *against* making. This is Hegel's revealing or Trinitarian key, identically Thomistic, Augustinian, or even, in a further difference, Aristotelian, as it is also and more immediately Cartesian thought, thus making the latter known to itself. This act is a self-knowing as self-originating, perpetually or constitutively so as infinity again, as spirit or mind, necessarily therefore mind-ing itself. It must thus “present itself”, in that revelation which, says Hegel, it is, and this is, for us, the difficult idea, given that it cannot be taken from as derivative upon any finite everyday consciousness of “ours”³⁵. One recalls rather the Pauline notion of the Father “from whom all fatherhood on heaven and earth is *named*”, thus, by backward reflection, making this first concept a pictured representation or “analogy” rather than itself principle, as it truly is, of all finite *logoi* or speech. What is thus pictured pictures *us* picturing moments of itself.

³⁴ Cf. *Enc.* 159.

³⁵ Cf. Aristotle's *Physics* II, comparing with *Metaphysics* IV, VII-IX and XII as “an original literary unity” (F. Inciarte, “The Unity of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*”, in *Substance and Action*, published by George Ohms, Hildesheim 2002 (German original in *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 101, 1994, pp. 1-21).

This Father Hegel calls the “simple, self-identical eternal essence”, non-derived, necessary. Absolute, in or as which, in difference, all and each is conceived, being otherwise a merely abstract figment. It is the Idea. This essence, which is essence itself, must, in order to be manifest in itself and not purely ideal, realise or actively form itself or, rather, be such an actual self-forming. This in religion becomes self-generation, reproduction, as of a son as counterpart to a father, in whom alone motherhood is implicitly real, Hegel finds, whether or not conversely, thus far anticipating C.G. Jung. Thus form imposes itself as determinant of being as lying behind it, more real than being as the latter's actual truth, which is form over again, analogate to *analogon* and *vice versa*. It is, that is, the Idea, a principle or *arche*, not a thing or *etwas*, though in logic this identity in difference is immediately entailed (by mediation of infinity, of limitlessness). Religion itself qualifies or overcomes the finitude of its picture by adding, in its credal formulation, “begotten before all worlds” or in a “before” that is no more before than it is after. Such broken-backed assertions, of speculative reason, Hegel remarks, fall easy prey to the mere rationalist, to the understanding. Thus this son is God the Son, in a distinction which, Hegel says, is one of Love, no real distinction but made within an identity, precisely Aquinas's position. Infinity, as without limit, must utter, extrapolate, but not compositely. It must offer only and entirely its whole being or self, which thus becomes self in other and other in self, transcending this whole dilemma. They are one and the same spiritual reality, the procession outwards being the return to self, this being the life and motion of the spirit, which is here spirit as such, *Geist* or mind. What else could it be? This is the implicit question. There is no other “immaterial” substance than this ceaseless motion, “life” as we metonymically call it. Thus, in fact, does Hegel include will or love, pursuant of good in its notion, under his category of cognition, along with “cognition proper”, upon which it is even an “advance” on the way to the Idea, in “straight course”. “Good” and “will” become for him therefore interchangeable, in his two respective accounts of logic. The Spirit is itself identification of these two unitive aspects of knowing and known. So “the True and Real is just this movement turned circle-wise on itself” (cp. Baillie 767). This, as wisdom, is “pure play”, Hegel remarks, ultimate source of all wit, so to say, caught forever in the Cartesian *cogito*, known, therefore, to philosophy. The distinction, between Essence and Word, is “without sufficient opposition of nature”, a “distinction of love”, again. We can only take this, I think, as being a philosophy of play, making of mind and hence man essentially *homo ludens*, thus recalling the foundation of Absolute Spirit in Art, even or above all divine art, this and philosophy

finding their true being in one another, therefore, whether as looking back or looking forward.

The same process, therefore, as perhaps not sufficiently considered by Suzuki, "leads to the existence of a world" as primarily leading to a reduplication of persons in the Idea, in God. Infinity has to include community and only thus can this be so, as thought is itself the revelation of itself in word or language. Only community is, or can be, perfect unity. Trinity as necessary (to the Idea) is *a priori*, though thus far not necessarily exactly as de-fined, this infinite concept, by faith. Number of any kind is not essential to this plurality in unity, is "useless" to it. It might, or might not, then, include Mary or the Devil or the whole countless angelic host, and that as principles, now one, three or many or "legion". Each and all of these is the one concept, the Idea in necessary entirety, all in each, each in all, as the poet first sees the Word, God incarnate, reflected in the eyes (both of them?) of the celestial yet particular Beatrice, "eternal feminine" since and only since he or Goethe is masculine. Neither term, that is, stands for anything "in itself" apart from relation, as is the case first with the Trinitarian persons themselves though the converse equally holds. *Ipsae personae sunt relations* and Hegel will show how the truth of the other doctrine, of incarnation, is inseparable from this first one. In him, however, incarnation gets seen as not other than necessary appearance or revealing of the Idea, as the latter's own truth, flesh, namely, in itself "as grass", phenomenal. There is no particular or substantial taking of flesh, therefore, as something distinct from "revelation itself", from emptying. Since this applies to embodied mind as such when philosophically considered there is no Docetist or related "heresy" here, all of which consist in making the Divine Man less of a man than anyone else. We are all in ourselves nothing and mind takes on just that nothing, making the last first in and as freedom. The making of a world and the becoming flesh or man, as first and then second Adam, are thus one and the same, as man and God are the same and mind is itself everywhere as are (its) notion and instantiation indifferently in their difference. That is the element of truth, as seen by Hegel and the tradition, in Sartre's at first sight negative metaphysics, as it is of the Nietzschean eternal return in self-destruction of any concept of time. Here, taught by Hegel, we make a new synthesis, as proper to our time and place, always remembering, however, in this analogical and not merely abstract sameness in difference of God and the world that the former, unlike the latter, is more unlike than like (in the words of a medieval Church Council) what it is opposed to as having, as infinite, in words of Thomas

Aquinas, no “real” relation to it, to what, in Hegel’s exposition, is a mere “moment” of itself.

Stephen Theron, 2016

A: HISTORICAL

CHAPTER ONE

PREDICATION AND SPECULATIVE REWRITING: ARISTOTLE TO HEGEL

There is a point, Hegel claims, at which mind thinking, becomes or is the same as, God. The Idea, in fact, as absolute, means or intends nothing less. The whole of morality or praxis is here swallowed up, absorbed, the Good and even the True, equally, in Being. This, I want to point out, is in absolute continuity with Thomas Aquinas, when he claims, at *QD de potentia* VII and elsewhere, that Being is the only “transcendental predicate” that is not a being of reason, *ens rationis*, only. What Hegel systematically goes on to point out is that by this the whole of religious praxis, inclusive of the habit of faith, or the virtue of hope, as indeed of all habits, inclusive of love supremely, is thus absolutised in “first philosophy”. Love is the one of the three “theological virtues” that he mentions at *Enc.* 159 as identical with thinking, though in difference, i.e. “as feeling”, *als Empfindung*. Praxis itself, therefore, under which we may include living as a whole, is included in absorption under thinking, which as not at all discursive or “temporal” we may call contemplation, *theoria*, as itself again, however, “the highest praxis”. In coining this phrase Aristotle had himself shown, therefore, the same awareness as, I have just claimed, is also that of Aquinas. For the latter, namely, Good and True *are* Being over again but as related to will and intellect respectively as these are found abstractly separate in phenomenal man. In God, in Spirit, where Hegel correctly places them, and as Aquinas agrees, they are one. It is only that by the latter’s teaching method, I consider, that one proceeds from the less to the more true, so to say, while Hegel follows rather the method of logic itself, where it is one with the content and the form, of the system, indifferently. Yet by this “swallowing up” mentioned above Being is itself the Good and the True, is God. Either way, without the evil and falsity of the finite goodness and truth are transcended as the abstractions that they are. This is the positive *difference* of God as we find it in Hegel. Any

invitation to “skip a line” where God is mentioned (the Marxist way of reading) is quite mistaken, therefore.¹

This lies behind, as much as it follows from, Eckhart’s saying, which Hegel picks up, that “if God were not, I would not be, while if I were not, God would not be”, a saying that does not merely leave open the question as to cause or effect and which of the two clauses here is which. It entirely sublates causality, which is the same as ignoring (not knowing) it, in identity of being. From this follows also the necessity of all mind and all its particular individualisations, as might at least, again, at least seem to follow, as known by the absolute necessity of final or “divine” freedom, to use a theological term, which is freedom, simply. This latter requires further discussion, however, as opening questions as to how I am I and not you, or how I am both I and you, or possibly am not myself at all, this being required for absolute self-consciousness. For the I itself of the subject, any subject, has to be subjectivity itself, as is proved in and by (Hegel’s) logic. The claim is that in thinking itself this identity is realised. What alone restricts this “seeming to follow” is the abstractness, the alienatedness, on the part of the individuals themselves of unmediated experience, such as those in a “cloud of midges” to which Hegel refers in LPEG. For midge or man this point, about abstract individuality, is the same. It is only that man, the individual, is the phenomenon of his own true or noumenal self in self-consciousness, thus cancelling this distinction while retaining it in the idea, as the midge is not, the Scriptural “numberedness” of the hairs of our head, or of individual falling sparrows notwithstanding. For “it is useless to count” (Hegel); *numeri non ponuntur in divinis* (Aquinas). The moments of the Idea, that is to say, are not separable, as in finite abstraction, from its absolutely free variability as now this, now that, or all these altogether indifferently. Whole and part are one, yet here too not by absorption of the one in the other, all such momentary notions, with their very momentariness, being absorbed, rather, in the Idea. This, again, is the absolute difference of God (see above) in being different from nothing at all. Nothing, after all, is nothing, is not.

On Hegel’s account it follows too that the identity is realised also in faith, a virtue or habit as thinking itself is a habit. It is indeed a habit of the end, *telos*, but as thus realised finally in love, identical with thinking, we

¹ Compare this with Hegel’s discussion of the proposition “God is Being” and its converse, “Being is God” in the Preface to *The Phenomenology of Mind* and, indeed, at the conclusion of that book. See also the concluding page or two of *The Science of Logic*, edn. Suhrkamp 6, Frankfurt 1969 (1972) pp. 571-573, for the German original.

noted above. The index of this absorption is the remaining theological virtue, hope, which, precisely *qua* virtue, in what we might now call finite religious praxis (without contradicting religion's own absolute spirituality), is swallowed up or absorbed. Hope is the virtue of identification with its own absorption or putting by. We hope that we will not need to hope. It is thus time-bound as witness to this very bond as finite non-being.

Just therefore this is not at all to say, abstractly, that only philosophers attain union with God, a vain claim sometimes put forward, in antiquity chiefly. Rather, philosophy is itself identified with thinking, as constituting the "rational animal" in being, a being just therefore transcending its own animality and all phenomena, as is "proper" even to children, Hegel explicitly says (whatever is to be said concerning infants or the first "conceived"). Just therefore, in the universality of thought, its praxis, the hardness of necessity for consciousness is "melted", *die Auflösung jener Härte*. Faith, available immediately to all, is the beginning or first stimulus, in irritation, of such thinking, of thinking itself, viewable as no mere coming to terms with but as the undivided embrace, active and passive indifferently therefore, of necessity in its own or logically specific freedom.

In this conception of things, which is itself the Concept, absorptive and finally declaratory of all Being or Essence, of these, rather, as such, the latter are totally or of necessity absorbed in the Idea, in Spirit (*Geist*), in the power of which all things are finally understood or known. Hence it to spirit as such, finally (in the full sense of finality), to "the Holy Spirit", that Aquinas offers *donum*, gift, as its true name, answering the question why Spirit alone, in the Trinity, has no proper name, such as Father or Son. He does this, however, not without giving his more substantive interpretation of this negative fact, whereby spirit indeed emerges as syllogistic conclusion to this threefold syllogism that is Trinity. As Hegel puts it, "Everything is a syllogism".

Following upon this first Eckhartian thesis, which we have here shown Hegel developing, we find the second, if anything more far-reaching declaration he avails himself of from this source, one employing the metaphor of the eye: "The eye with which I see God is the eye with which God sees me". There we have what we want, he shall have said (to von Baader). The commencement with self is more correct than the reverse order of this identification, though its less striking inversion necessarily follows. In logic the concept of cause itself, again, is but momentary. This identification thus includes that whole process of which the Idea, as divine truth, so to say, is the actual or active result, rather than effect. In this Idea, as itself the "Absolute", all the preceding means, including the finitely

viewed self, are fulfilled in being cancelled, are cancelled in being fulfilled. Hence we speak of death of life, as “the immediate idea only”, as entry into spirit, the Absolute Idea (and final true being, the Greater Logic ends by declaring, we noted).

Now Eckhart, like any Dominican at that time, was a Thomist, and so, we are finding, was Hegel, in the measure, at least, that both were Aristotelians. This might appear as reasoning illicitly from an undistributed middle term, though it is in fact a triple identification of individuals. As for Aquinas, however, we might further remark that inasmuch as Hegel’s account of knowledge is Augustinian, Aquinas in turn must be found to be Augustinian as Augustine is found to be Pauline and thus finally Mosaic, though this might seem to clash with a long prejudice of Hegel’s. Moses, after all, was granted to see God’s “back parts” only, in the quaint metaphor of *Exodus*. Really, however, the metaphor is not at variance with Augustine’s development of the Psalmist’s “In thy light shall we see light” for his theory of knowledge, a theory, we noted, further developed in a palpable continuity by Hegel and only apparently rejected by Aquinas in favour of a more “naturalistic” account of knowledge, before being re-assumed by Descartes in his appeal to the “light” of reason. Or was Aquinas really against such a “light”? He speaks of immateriality as the root of cognition. This is therefore outside of material nature, *natura materialiter spectata*, though the very form of this phrase proclaims that this is not nature as she is or, for that matter, as Aquinas would view a creation including angels or pure spirits, treated as “physical” beings, so to say. Whether we “believe” in them or not is not at issue. Light, Hegel says, “is nature’s first ideality”. Viewed in the context of his whole system this would point rather to the general falsity of abstract matter, rather than a first transcendence of it from within the specifically “material” system. For him this is “alienated” rather than material, the alienation giving rise to the misperception (of materiality). The difference with Aquinas, rather, is over the whole question of realism, moderate or anything else, of universals or of anything else, as a or the true form of philosophy. Here, though, the question opens up of Aquinas’s true relation to absolute idealism, as one who says, just for example, that God, the infinite knower, “only” knows things in his own idea of them. Or, if matter is itself only known “immaterially”, where is the realism, where is matter? How does it differ from the unknowable “thing in itself” both Hegel and Aquinas decisively reject? As clinching this thesis of continuity, recall that Aquinas affirmed the causality of the known by the knower as necessary in the case of absolute knowledge, upon which indeed all, including the knowing itself, depends as an existence resulting

of necessity from essence as this, and therefore also that, further, from the Idea. Dialectic is thus a movement backwards, as McTaggart once emphasised. Freedom is, necessarily, its own result. "God is not being, God is freedom", Berdyaev accordingly declared, appending to the system, according to some, such as Travis Grotewold, a "questionable ideology". Others simply see here philosophy necessarily referring back, as showing that that is what is here fulfilled in perfected *Gottesdienst* (Hegel), to religious language as the latter finds its spiritual, even logical priority in art, which Hegel can accordingly refer to as "the religion of art" on occasion. Religion would appear to be seen as the middle term here, a by no means negligible role in what is accordingly a theogonic (as in Hesiod) rather than an anthropological account of things, as, again, we have, *mutatis mutandis*, in Aquinas.

*

Here, though, is the question facing us: is this a development of "the Christian faith", a development of doctrine as Newman expounded this in 1845 or, more especially, is it a further development of this doctrine of development, one that would logically follow as included but one that might "break the mind", as Newman puts it in referring to any denial of God? Hegel, the earlier thinker, is perhaps the more bold. The centre, tradition itself, dynamic, holds, all the more so where development is not put as restrictive, in accordance with a certain finite conception of faith as a saving habit, but as ampliative, as being led, spirit leading rather, into "all truth"..

In this way the ancestry of "globalisation" as of ecumenism, its truer name, derives from the mediator between the phenomenon man and the Idea, which is mind. As absolute, infinite, mind mediates between itself and the finite, between being and nothing, for only thus does nothing become substance or being over again, in and as the Idea.

It is essential here that in anyone's saying "I am God", in affirming self-consciousness, God is not lost but gained rather, in and on a way hitherto closed. The analogue of this is the revolution called French or the Enlightenment generally as bringing the sown Gospel seed to the surface, as happens periodically, or to a new flowering from these roots in the one *Ur-Pflanze*. The Gospel, that is, has to be ultimately eternal, confirming the jots and tittles, as such seminal notions can then seem, preceding.

Even the Renaissance, yet more deeply, was precursor to this, both deflected and, in theology, further projected by religious reaction, resulting in the unstable Baroque and Rococo compromises out of which, as in

opposition to which, enlightened classicism arose, complemented and succeeded by a Romanticism partly negative (where it denied the past by not taking it seriously, even murdering it), partly rediscovery with difference, to which Hegel's genius posed the conclusion we here further develop. We do this after "modernism", in finite method, with its mechanist democracy, its quantitative dictatorships, despite Rousseau, had obscured the earlier Hegelianism, continuing underground though in Darwin and, implicitly, Freud. For the spiritual or mental method is logic itself, freely availing itself or not of experience, reflection or anything else.

*

Hegel asserts, then, that Christianity and philosophy share the same content. The Idea is here both Subject and Object. The "faith appropriation in and by the spiritual community" is or may be seen "as the self-consciousness of God", comments O'Regan² in oblique citation as deadpan as the original from *The Phenomenology of Mind* (cp. Baillie 795), final "Absolute Knowledge" chapter. "It is ego, which is this ego and no other, and at the same time immediately is mediated, or sublated, universal ego" (p. 798). Philosophy's mode of conceiving, indeed of symbolising, where put into language, is more adequate to the content. Yet that Christianity should be seen as involving the divine self-consciousness is after all appropriate, though we will only know God fully, it declares, logic confirming, as and when, or if, appropriated by the divine, individually and yet, just therefore, communally, in and by full self-consciousness.

Trinitarian representation needs, as such, correction, "demythologisation", which can be either hostile or non-hostile (ultimately this is a matter of indifference), passing through representation to pure thought, pure, that is, as including all. It is the mystical or philosophical content that is true. "Orthodoxy stands or falls with the mystical interpretation of Scripture" (Newman). Yet philosophy as such, ungrateful, has no further need of Scripture, indebted though she be, like St. Francis on his deathbed declining to have it read to him.

Discussion of the speculative proposition here is central. Hegel says it is divine. God himself is this very proposition. One cannot separate the subject of this proposition from the predicates that articulate it, as if having any significant priority. The predicates don't just identify a subject; they give it (the grammatical subject) its reality, if any. The predicate is

² Cyril O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel*, p. 333.

different in its sameness. What language represents is not representation over again. This is very close to Wittgenstein: "The limits of my language are the limits of my world". Yet it is different, since, again, what language represents is not language over again. This is the point of "the speculative". The subject, anyhow, must flow into these predicates, in dynamic movement from grammatical to real subject in and through the predicates. That is, logic is metaphysics, not over again a mere logic of metaphysics. Logic is *logos*, word being ever replaced or absorbed by word alone, right up to the final Word, speaking itself in eternal self-generation as is its nature. Here first is the modern Kantian turn to the subject justified and no longer a dissociation of consciousness from its articulation. As Aquinas taught, the soul knows itself in knowing other things only. Hegel universalises this or shows that it had only an appearance of restriction, self and other being finally, in Trinity, the same. "I and my father are one" or, as it is also put, "The Son knows the Father as the Father knows the Son" (indirect quote). Hegel continues the tradition of fulfilling the Scriptures, old or new, whether intentionally or by coincidence or as of natural habit or by all three together, more probably.

So the articulation of content is the simultaneously differentiating activity of the subject (*actus essendi*) and *vice versa*. The proposition, then, is the subjective-objective unity (as is said of the Idea). It is no more (but no less) linguistic than Wittgenstein's, Carnap's or Leibniz's "simple propositions", though it quite reverses the latter's "If there are composites there must be simples". There is just one such proposition, expressing not absolute but concrete identity (in, namely, infinite difference).

CHAPTER TWO

ARISTOTLE, THOMAS, HEGEL

Thomas Aquinas asks, at *Summa theologiae* Ia 27,2: “Whether some procession in divine things could be called generation”. The previous or first article of this particular seeking (*quaestio*), beginning his “Treatise on the Triune God” (*De Deo Trino*, QQ 27-45), which follows upon *De Deo Uno* (QQ 2-26; Question One, to which we will be referring not merely with regard to the question of “method”, unless in the extended sense developed by Hegel near the end of both versions of his “Science of Logic”, treats of “sacred science” or theology as such) had asked “Whether there is procession in divine things”. There is a close similarity with Hegel’s account of these same things. Both accounts find a common ancestor in the passage from Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, of close on fifteen lines, with the citing of the Greek original of which Hegel closes his *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. Aquinas brings the absorptive method of positive theology to his own systematic treatises on God and on the Trinity, paralleling in this Hegel’s absorptive presentation, which is the method that is logic and metaphysics in one as absorbed in, without absorbing, the Absolute Idea.¹ Hegel attains to his insights by way of a developed Absolute Idealism, i.e. developed by himself, proffered as “the dogma of philosophy”, by his own logico-philosophical theory the super-dogma without more ado.

Thus here the specific procession of generation is supplied to Aquinas by an existing theological dogma already in credal place. The coincidence in large part, as we shall see, with Hegel’s account is all the more striking. We have a continuous doctrine from pre-Christian Greek, through scholastic Latin to relatively modern Germano-European thought. To this

¹ This parallel holds, though limited to our “in this”, even if we might accept Georges van Riet’s contention that “there *are* two systems in Saint Thomas, for there are two first principles, of which neither judges the other” (*viz.* faith or revelation, “the theological” side and philosophy, which also becomes a “side”, he says), while “Hegel rejects all dualism” (“The Problem of God in Hegel”, Parts II-III, *Philosophy Today*, Summer 1967, pp. 75-105. Cf. p. 77).

picture we should need to add our assessment of the Hebraic contribution, inclusive of a Greco-Judaic element, to be found principally in the Scriptures through which Aquinas's and Hegel's thinking were both pedagogically formed. If faith is needed for our eventual understanding yet this same, as absolute knowledge, "ungratefully" dismisses it as love fulfils in abolishing an immediately needful hope.

The key proposition when looking for the tie-up between Aquinas and Hegel is the former's statement, as a conclusion formed earlier in the *Summa*, that in God understanding (*sc.* knowing) and being are the same², something so pointedly emphasised by Hegel that he even calls *God* the Idea, as being God's proper philosophical or analytic name. Descartes had said: "I think, therefore I am". In the supreme case, into which, as infinite, to repeat, all other cases are assumed, Hegel in effect corrects this to "I think and that is what I am", i.e. *that is what being is*. For Hegel, that is, the *esse commune* with which logic as such begins itself develops into, or is cast aside in favour of, *esse divinum*, the Absolute Idea and the Absolute: this corresponds, but more dynamically, to the graduated conceptual structure in Aquinas, more architectural than musical. There are not and cannot finally be, for either thinker, however, two independent principles, whether the duo reason and faith or that of thinking and being. Descartes still treats these, the latter, as independent principles, soul and body, thought and extension, even though this leaves him with a more pronounced dualism than that endured by previous philosophy. In Hegel by contrast, being, although identified at the beginning of the system as that "with which science must begin", is itself identified again at the conclusion of the Logic(s), with the Idea, with thinking. Thinking is what being, ultimately, is, which, being, is thus the same in meaning as how being is itself thought, as the thought of being, if we are to be consistent. This identification is in no way a reduction of being but rather the proper elevation of thought as the Absolute Idea. God, Spirit, by definition lacks nothing. It is with affirmation of this that Hegel's *The Science of Logic* closes:

So ist denn auch die Logik in der absoluten Idee zu dieser einfachen Einheit zurückgegangen, welche ihr Anfang ist; die reine Unmittelbarkeit des Seins, in dem zuerst alle Bestimmung als ausgelöscht oder durch die Abstraktion weggelassen erscheint, ist die durch die Vermittlung, nämlich die Aufhebung der Vermittlung zu ihrer entsprechende Gleichheit mit sich gekommene Idee. (Suhrkamp 6, p.572: Thus also logic has, in the Absolute

² *Summa theol.* Ia 14, 4: *e.x necessitate sequitur quod ipsum ejus intelligere sit ejus essentia et ejus esse.*

Idea, returned to this simple unity which is its beginning; while, that is to say, the pure immediacy of being, in which at first all determinations appear as dissolved or discarded through abstraction, is, through mediation, namely through the suspension of mediation, the Idea as come to its own corresponding equality with itself)

And here is the passage from Aristotle with which Hegel concludes his *Encyclopaedia*. He gives it in the original Greek:

Now thinking in itself is concerned with that which is in itself best, and thinking in the highest sense with that which is in the highest sense best. And thought thinks itself through participation in the object of thought; for it becomes an object of thought by the act of apprehension and thinking, so that thought and the object of thought are the same, because that which is receptive of the object of thought, i.e. essence, is thought. And it actually functions when it possesses this object. Hence it is actuality rather than potentiality that is held to be the divine possession of rational thought, and its active contemplation is that which is most pleasant and best. If then, the happiness which God always enjoys is as great as that which we enjoy sometimes, it is marvellous; and if it is greater, this is still more marvellous. Nevertheless it is so. Moreover, life belongs to God. For the actuality of thought is life, and God is that actuality; and the essential actuality of God is life most good and eternal. We hold, then, that God is a loving being, eternal, most good; and therefore life and a continuous eternal existence belong to God; for that is what God is. (*Metaphysics* XII 7, 1072b 18-31. Loeb Classical Library, Heinemann, London & Harvard University Press, 1947).

CHAPTER THREE

INTENTIONAL SPECIES, PHENOMENAL REALITY?: AQUINAS, HEGEL

We begin and remain with the article of the *Summa theologiae* Ia 85, 2) of Thomas Aquinas where he distinguishes the “intentional species”, as that by which we think and perceive (*id quo*) from the object of perception or thought, *id quid*, which is the *res* and as such, for him as for Hegel, more than the *objectum*. This *res* is in Hegel, however, the Absolute Idea. Yet in this way both thinkers transcend the “subjective idealism” of most of the intervening thinkers. Scotus, as a kind of axial mediator, postulates a correlate *esse obiectivum* of what is perceived as not yet the “thing in itself”, anticipating the Hegelian McTaggart’s “systematic misperception” of all that is not one with the Absolute Idea (“Turn but a stone and you touch a wing”, writes the Victorian poet), while in this regard André de Muralt writes of Kant as “the last Ockhamist”¹. Hegel, it is implied, in his critique of Kant, takes up the Thomist-Aristotelian thread again. The Absolute Idea, Spirit, is indeed being, the *res*, already perceived under the veils of sense, proper object of mind as alienated in nature, according to Aquinas, a nature, however, deprived of original “preternatural gifts”. There is, that is to say, no “veil of perception” as such or in itself, unless this idea be completely universalised, as in the Hegelian logic, where opposites are the same in their very difference, as, correlatively, each instance of mind is the whole world, is subject absolutely in its unerring self-consciousness. Hegel shows, however, these instruments of explanation employed by Aquinas, or by a “realist consciousness” generally, such as that to which Aquinas as teacher addresses himself, to be strictly theological representations, as distinct from the true being of thought. This

¹ A. de Muralt, *L'enjeu de la philosophie médiévale*, Brill, Leyden 1991: see also his “Kant le dernière occamien”. On Aristotle’s mental realism see Eugene Gendlin, “Line by Line Commentary on Aristotle’s De Anima”. The Focussing Institute, New York 2012.

is why, as Georges van Riet finds, “there are two systems in Aquinas” side by side, instead of the truths of religion being assimilated to the philosophical, where the aboriginal unity of God and man, put in religion as an absolute or “miraculous” event within the frame of contingency, as Spirit, is established.

The immediate sense-object for Aquinas is internal. It is thus, though immediate, not immediately perceived. What is immediately perceived is the “external” reality it mediates. This immediate sense-object can be perceived or, rather, thought or conceived, mediately, therefore, mediated by the retinal image or by the conceptual sign as the case may be² (John of St. Thomas, i.e. Jean Poinsoot). For that another species, both “impressed” and “expressed”, is required. The doctrine, that is, though taking its rise in analysis of sense-perception, finds fullest application in the delineation of thinking, of the acts of intellect.

Hegel finds, as fruit of the dialectic, that what is internal is external and *vice versa*, as the above already suggests. The terms, like much of language, are metaphorical, treating the mind itself as spatial and, indeed, spatially limited. But then again we have to note that this immediate or internal sense-object is not itself the intentional species, but rather a likeness or analogy of it. The latter, namely, is in principle never immediately perceived or perceived at all. Species means simply appearance. It can of course be conceived, in the sense that we can conceive anything whatever, in a sense immediately. So why were we speaking of an intellectual species expressed as mediating?

Answer: the concept or *verbum mentale*, including now judgment and syllogism, is seen in scholastic realism as mediating, just as concept, a reality. This “subjective concept” thus becomes, in John of St. Thomas (Poinsoot), the *signum formale* by which (*quo*) the reality is perceived or, we have to say, *conceived* indifferently. As essentially sign it is itself formally imperceptible. It is the antithesis of Object. In a precisely similar way, however, this Object will itself yield place, in Hegel, to the Absolute Idea, the Concept, of which, like all concepts and/or categories, it is a dialectical forerunner through which the Concept, the Absolute, Thought itself thinking itself, is apprehended, whole and entire in each and all of its infinite differentiations, which are thus in this regard identical.

Inasmuch as the inside is the outside, then, the concept or *species* do not mediate the object of sense or thought, of cognition. With that this very

² For the spirituality of even sense-perception, its “formal” character, see Sheldon M. Cohen, “St. Thomas Aquinas on the Immaterial Reception of Sensible Forms”, *The Philosophical Review*, April 1982. See also work by Herbert McCabe OP on this theme.

conception vanishes, is “cancelled”, as being itself a mere appearance, an *id quo* or momentary dialectical resting-place. Appearance namely, *id quo*, is equally the world itself mediating Substance, which is finally I, Subject, Idea, called in or represented by religion as God. Substance, that is, is itself *hypokeimenon*, as much matter as form. That is, it is no longer *underlying* matter, since inside is outside, part is whole, in “the Concept”, cause, finally, is effect. This move forward in philosophy, initiated by Spinoza, culminates, if relatively, in Hegel's corrections of the latter, as the New Testament, in theology, completes the Old, which yet remains God's Word through and through, its end in its beginning and contrariwise.

In general what mediates, as immediate, is itself mediated by the mediated. Mediation, *id quo*, is itself a mediated notion and not the Concept. If the immediate, as *id quo* or “that by which” (“internal” sense-object) is not itself perceived, in principle, then this has pre-eminently to be true of “the world”. We perceive there Substance, *id quod* or “that which”, which is not finally seen, not sensed in abstraction from the Concept, from Intellect or Idea. This though is the ultimately internal, which is to say Subjectivity, of the Subject, thus the final (external) reality, the God “closer than I am to myself” in Augustinian terms or, in reversed representation, “In God we live and move and have our being”. Such prepositional reciprocity, of “in” is incipient speculative deconstruction of the supposed material world. The speculative, that is, is first a moment within religion itself, thus transcending itself towards philosophy or, rather, *sophia*, itself *sancta* or holy. Hegel thus speaks of that *Gottesdienst* which is philosophising.

We argue from the species, “impressed” somewhere on the body, meaning it is “internal”. It is, rather, a construct needed at one point in history to explain perception or knowledge or, equally, “how language refers” in what is thus a three-tiered semantics of thing, word and idea. The fifth wheel of this trio, so to say, is not however idea but thing, which ultimately became the *Ding an sich* of Kant that Hegel so thoroughly debunked. The true thing, to which the category thing becomes sublated, *aufgehoben*, is the Absolute Idea, the true being of each and every thing, of everything indeed, which is thus nothing considered only abstractly without it.

Thus Body itself is a construct, argued for in the same way, superimposed on the I or ego, upon self-consciousness. This is what is meant by saying that God created a world. He constructed it, by *fiat* indeed, as a means of seeing or manifesting himself, as not indeed separable from this his very self-manifestation or “glory”. To see the creation materially is to miss this, miss the substance. “Turn but a stone

and you touch a wing". God and man, as spirit begun in self-consciousness, necessarily, are "the same". That is, the thought of sense and that of existence, thing, as later corresponding to it necessarily are present to infinite mind, since they are, simply. "If I were not, God would not be and if God were not, I would not be" (Eckhart).

Hence the argument of the *Summa*, here at Ia, 85, 2, repeats itself when Substance, which is what is searched for (in Aristotle for example), is revealed as Mind, as Spirit, as Idea, as the Concept (*der Begriff*), the same substance in all, as we find in Parmenides, and this is the trajectory of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* through the later books after the encounter with contradiction in Book Four.³ All this can shed light upon, increase understanding of, Christian dogma.

*

Hegel wishes to trace the contours of absolute thought, how, that is, thought thinks itself, as he claims to show it necessarily does. Necessity, one must keep in mind, as thought, is infinite, is necessarily one with absolute freedom. Necessity in fact "passes" to Freedom as Necessity's own truth and this passage, writes Hegel, concluding "The Doctrine of Essence" and leading into that of the Concept or Notion, "is the very hardest" (EL159, where the very last word is "freedom", of which, we go on to read immediately at 160, "The Notion is the principle", thought is its principle since it is what "thinking means").

This is in fact what theology attempts, but whereas Aquinas and the others concentrate on how we must think God, adding the general rider that all we say of God is merely analogous to our usual conceptions in their Subject-Predicate form, Hegel takes as his task, as the task, that of God's thinking himself, set forth in a progressive freedom from representation (*Vorstellung*) and/or analogy, precisely as is attempted in formal logical theory.

So in theology the act of free creation is represented as occurring outside time. There is no before creation for God. Jakob Boehme seems to fall short of this insight of Aquinas and others, saying rather that before creation God had not yet become God, but was rather a pure, so to say inchoate will. Hegel preserves this insight, all the same, making of it a progressive dialectic, in which, incidentally, Becoming becomes, where, as he says, the Absolute results (we should not say "emerges") as "its own

³ Cf. F. Inciarte, "*Die Einheit der aristotelischen Metaphysik*", in *Philosophisches Jahrbuch*, 1994., pp. 1-21 (English version as a chapter in Inciarte's posthumous *Substance and Action*, Ohms, Hildesheim, 2002).

result". That is, he cancels the idea of a result, incompatible anyhow with his assertion of "realised end", in the very act of using the language of "result". Nothing can be its own result or even *causa sui*, until we come to assert that the effect is the cause and *vice versa*, thus obviating this duality as well.

So creation appears as necessary to God, just as Aquinas says that being is God's proper effect. He there asserts while concealing its necessity. Hegel shows, as we just stated, however, that this necessity is itself freedom in the Absolute or, as we say, in the absolute with a small "a". Boehme's "before creation" is compatible with the view of time as eternity's own representation. Here "before" is equivalent to "logically without". Creation is not a later "event".

As divine or absolute thought, however, neither creation nor anything else can have a beginning or change at all, since this belongs to finitude and unactualised potentiality. Hegel tackles this problem of a Beginning at the beginning (!) of his Science of Logic. Philosophy is revealed as a circle. There is no entering of this circle, within or upon the circumference of which, however, all spirit, all spirits, necessarily sit. This, again, is their freedom.

Our traversal upon the dialectic, therefore, our study and assimilation of it, has strictly to be characterised as a remembering or, rather, calling to mind. The fact that not all spirits undertake this journey explicitly or *ad litteram* does not signify. Obviously not everyone studies or needs to study the dialectic as equated with its particular presentation in the German language of the day by Hegel. Even as regards this there is not just one univocal presentation. McTaggart and others have shown how Hegel's presentations and indeed deductions vary and the former also shows why this does not constitute any kind of inbuilt counter-example or contradiction. The truth of the dialectic lies in its principle, and not in this or that meandering of thought. It is the method. Its term, the Absolute, is envisaged in each and every step along the way. Each concept or category, that is, "is the very total which the notion is", something Hegel goes on to painstakingly set forth in his presentation of "The Subjective Notion" in terms of, and as a study of, the traditional formal logic, single-handedly discovered by Aristotle as Hegel now discovers the dialectic.

Plato's insight of *anamnesis*, itself recalled here into philosophy or remembered, necessarily sets up the frame of ourselves, the thinkers, as eternal spirits. This, however, is not to be equated with Plato's dualist talk of "souls", of which Hegel makes short work in his "Philosophy of Spirit", third part of the *Encyclopaedia* of which the logic is the first and

determinative part, part which is rather the whole which is indeed not a whole in any organic sense, the Logic itself makes clear (*Enc.* 135). The “material” world of “body” falls away, rather, but this too can be glimpsed as implicit in Plato, talking of the things which “both are and are not”, thus illustrating that he too, like the slave-boy in his *Meno*, has or even is the Concept. What we attribute to this slave-boy, the sense is, we can as well attribute not merely to every human being, a particular category, but to any and every spirit whatever, to Spirit as such, that is to say. It “is to say” in terms of the relations between individual, particular and universal worked out by Hegel as the Subjective Notion, or as in our formal logical thinking, the Understanding. In this working out, however, the Understanding is “sublated” towards, superseded by, Reason itself as going to the uttermost Ground of things, where, in Wittgenstein’s image, the spade buckles, strikes rock and not merely because, even if this is so, “explanations have to stop somewhere”. There is, that is to say, a foundation. This only becomes “foundationalism” if we mistake this *Vorstellung*, this dead metaphor of our speech, for the reality. In reality, since the end is realised, there are no means abstracted from it, no superstructure built “upon” the concept, just as in Aristotelian thought the accidents are not stuck on to the substance like chewing gum stuck to a pre-existent table.

Our insisting on absolute changeless, immutability, might seem constrained in appearance. Really it is not. All is absolutely accomplished, as Hegel argues and concludes from the earlier dialectical development, not indeed as if finished long ago. Any line drawn under such a de-finite tableau would indeed be finite. We might rather say, “All shall be well and all manner of thing”, i.e. it is the same Concept, as the past and the future are one and so not themselves. This oneness is indeed the very condition for plurality as such, as the cows uniformly lacking colour in darkness only serve to define that Darkness because of their variegatedness otherwise. But “the darkness is no darkness with thee”, as Scripture has it. That is, the Concept is that resolution of all discord and contradiction described at *Enc.* 159.

*

Newman (1801-1890), as a boy, “thought life might be a dream, or [he] an angel, and all this world a deception, [his] fellow angels by a playful device concealing themselves from [him] with the semblance of a material world.”⁴ This is exactly the view of life and reality advanced not long after

⁴ J.H. Newman: *Apologia pro vita sua*.

Newman's death by McTaggart, claiming to expound Hegel, correctly as I think. Newman's "two and two only absolute... beings, myself and my Creator", furthermore, coincide exactly with Hegel's account of Absolute Subjectivity, if we can take the two beings as ultimately working out as one, the I. This, furthermore, was by no means regarded by Newman as a passing boyhood fancy.

It could be possible to separate this philosophico-mystical core of Newman from what could then be regarded as the phenomena of his concern for "the defence of 'Revealed Religion'". Thus in the service of the latter project he utilises the category of the external, taken as non-internal. Thus Revelation means that which comes "from outside" and not within us, by the Spirit for example. This opposition, however, is demolished in Hegel's Logic. Revelation is Spirit's own development, just as Spirit is identical with any "finite" spirit. Newman refuses to or never thinks of thematising the concept of revelation he takes over from unreflective ordinary speech and thinking.

*

Hegel often finds or advances confirmation of his logical theses and categorical development in Christian teachings, while at the same time the logic, it seems clear, is offered in confirmation of the latter, of course incidentally merely, if we are regarding his method. Regarding the Speculative Method of Logic itself, however, inasmuch as the Absolute Idea is "its own content", which in turn is nothing other than "its own self", which indeed it "contemplates", this is altogether one with the content. The content is Method. Method, rather, in finite terms, is this working towards a resulting in itself which is of the essence of Realised End. The Content, which the Idea is, "is the system of Logic". Hegel adds that this aspect of Method, which he absolutises (relatively, all the same), is "the specific consciousness of the value and currency of the 'moments' in its development."⁵

So Method is in a sense practical, a value. Otherwise the Logic would not get written down, would not be formally thought or have attention paid to it. The value is its disclosure of Mind itself, ordering or conceiving all things, which thus are. The main reason for the hostility of "realists" to subjective idealists such as Kant is that they reduce Logic to a formalism, are inevitably formalists. For Plato or Aristotle logic, as encapsulated in a principle of non-contradiction, was the rule for what can be and what can

⁵ Hegel, *Enc.* 237.

be said indifferently. This at once yields a theory of speech and rationality as one, of *logos*. Yet this rule seems itself to break on the wheel of reality, as when Plato says that the same things “both are and are not”. One does not save the apparent contradiction of the principle of non-contradiction by asserting a contradiction, by saying that this is true only in a certain respect or, equivalently as it might seem, that they “both are and or not” but not of course in the same respect. They both are and are not in respect of being, which there is no going behind. This is Plato’s meaning, opening up at the same time the thought of something transcending being, at the other extreme of this “line” (his own image), so to say. Hegel indeed picks up this thread in making Existence a finite category within the Doctrine of Essence merely. Whatever can be thought is *eo ipso* actual, just as a being of reason (*ens rationis*) is a being. It is in that sense that non-being was found to be “as good as” being, at the beginning of the Logic, to be distinguished therefore from that “sham-being” we call Evil, “the absolute sham-existence of negativity in itself”.⁶ Negativity, naturally enough, “has no real persistence” and this is therefore reflected back upon Being itself at the beginning of Logic. Thought, it thus emerges, thinks itself, - only, we might add. It is *actus purus* rather than *actus essendi*. Thomas Aquinas repeated this insight in saying that Existence and Essence are ultimately or absolutely one and the same, identical. His fidelity here to a formulation in the Biblical *Exodus* has at times misled his followers on this point, as if he had discovered (had had “revealed” to him) something “hidden” from, say, Aristotle.

The formalism, that is, disappears where the Idealism is Absolute, in Hegel’s terms. In Realism, by contrast, it is preserved, in “formal” logic, but not absolutised. So Aquinas will say that logic (the logician) does not treat of the being of things. This formal “moment” is subverted in Hegel’s consideration of “the subjective notion”. He there confirms the insight, missed by the Fregeans, that Aristotle did not merely devise a finite “system” or grid for thoughts but discovered thought’s very principle, syllogism, namely, the proto-triad, where I become concretely universal just in my particularity.

Hence it is that in the Logic itself, the development of the Method, Hegel finds that Cause and Effect are one in endless Reciprocity. This result situates our original dilemma here, as to whether Christian or theological truth generally determines (reveals) Logic or *vice versa*. The solvent is Reason, *nous*, dialectic, enfolding the emergence of Christianity, of incarnation, of particularisation of the universal, in history. This event,

⁶ *Ibid.* 35 add,

in turn, “reveals” again the universal truth of the particularisation of the universal. The Concept differentiates itself infinitely, as being infinite and infinitely so, as the Idea of infinity itself. This was Anselm’s discovery, properly interpreted. This is the “blessedness” of which Hegel speaks at *Enc.*¹⁵⁹ and elsewhere, meaning by this something that Reason itself discloses (reveals) at every turn or twist of its actualisation here, there and everywhere.

CHAPTER FOUR

HEGEL AND KANT'S THIRD CRITIQUE

Hegel's main discussion of "The Critical Philosophy", his main criticism in particular of this critique, occurs at *Encyclopaedia* 40-60, while the same theme underlies the development from 204 to the close of the *Logic*:

We have now returned to the notion of the Idea with which we began (cf. 85: "Being itself and the special sub-categories of it which follow, as well as those of logic in general, may be looked upon as definitions of the Absolute, or metaphysical definitions of God:"). This return to the beginning is also an advance. We began with Being, abstract Being: where we now are we have the Idea as Being: but this Idea which has Being is nature. (244, parenthesis added)

This identification of God, of the Idea, with Nature is paralleled in *The Phenomenology of Mind* by the more far-reaching identification of Good with Evil, as moments one of another, so to say. This may help to indicate the centrality of our chosen theme here.

*

After an introduction (40-41) the discussion takes up Kant's three critiques in turn, viz. "The Theoretical Faculty" (42-52), the "Practical Reason" (53-54) and the "Reflective Power of Judgment" (56-60). I focus here upon the third, in which Hegel has a special interest:

The capital feature in Kant's *Criticism of the Judgment* is, that in it he gave a representation and a name, if not even an intellectual expression, to the Idea. Such a representation as an Intuitive Understanding, or an inner adaptation, suggests a universal which is at the same time apprehended as a concrete unity. It is in these aperçus alone that the Kantian philosophy rises to the speculative height... But in the postulated harmony of nature (or necessity) and free purpose, - in the final purpose of the world conceived as realised, Kant has put before us the Idea, comprehensive even in its content. Yet in what may be called the laziness of thought, when dealing with this supreme Idea, finds a too easy mode of evasion in the 'ought to

be': instead of the actual realisation of the ultimate end, it clings hard to the disjunction of the notion from reality. Yet if thought will not think the ideal realised, the senses and the intuition can at any rate see it in the present reality of living organisms and of the beautiful in Art. And consequently Kant's remarks on these objects were well adapted to lead the mind on to grasp and think the concrete Idea. (55)

One would only add that all this is to be found as well in Thomas Aquinas. It corresponds also to the mystic intuition that "All shall be well and all manner of thing", this last phrase immediately reducing the future tense to the present, as a "manner of thing". Anyhow, one may take Hegel here to be referring to his own mind, not necessarily without intermediaries such as Fichte, though here too he might say that the mind cancels the mediation in the act of appropriating it (cp. *Enc.* 65, 70).

What Hegel emphasises against Kant, however, is that the Idea here first (*sic*) propounded, is not compatible with Kant's divorce between "ought to be" and "the actual realisation of the ultimate end". It is, again, a "laziness of thought" that "clings hard to the disjunction of the notion from reality", for it is itself the supreme reality, simply. This, Hegel claims, "the senses and the intuition can at any rate see... in the present reality of living organisms and of the beautiful in Art", the first form of Absolute Spirit by his own account.

Reference to "the present reality of living organisms" relates this text to the need we have today for a philosophy of evolution, the biological in particular. As Hegel says, the "principle of inward adaptation and design", as outlined by Kant here, "had it been kept to and carried out in scientific application, would have led to a different and a higher method of observing nature" (58), such as he himself attempted to carry out in the middle section of this *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. Many today want to discount any implication of a guiding teleology behind the principle of the survival of the fittest. The fact remains, however, that this notion itself is the supreme statement of teleology, not to be disqualified as vacuously analytic in the Kantian sense. That those most fit to survive are the survivors is itself the transcendental unity of Being with Good, best instanced in Thomas Hobbes's account of "natural law", inasmuch as he makes the first precept of just such a law to be self-preservation, while the same principle, if with a difference, may be read off from Aquinas's account of such law. Without such a law, descriptive or prescriptive indifferently, there would be no survivors, no evolution. This is its necessity and the normativity of the factual as stressed by Hegel in particular.

If the end is realised, at any time indifferently, things all the while developing in time, as we find, then this can only be if time itself is finite and therefore false, by Hegel's standard. It is, Hegel says, "the World" and not Reason, as Kant would make out, that "is the seat of contradiction" precisely as finite. Yet "Kant restored the Idea to its proper dignity", though "he never got beyond its negative aspect, as what ought to be but is not" (45 add.).

As regards time, however, as the finite conception of an infinite extension merely, Thomas Aquinas remarked the implication that "whatever can happen at some time does happen", a remark leading to the later position that time is effectively the form of being, as in Heidegger's *Being and Time*. In Hegelian thought this is mere reflection, representation even, of the utter freedom which is the Idea and which he identifies with God. This cannot be a freedom, however, to go in and out of itself, so to say. Thus the annihilation of all things is not an option, is not something that "can happen" either in itself or at any time. This rebuts McTaggart's chief reason for rejecting God, apparently not realising that he was thereby rejecting the absoluteness of the Idea in its freedom or precisely what he was otherwise so well defending.

*

Concerning the supposed but "lazy" contradiction between Idea and reality Hegel says.

This contradiction may seem to be disguised by adjourning the realisation of the Idea to a future, to a time when the Idea will also be. But a sensuous condition like time is the reverse of a reconciliation of the discrepancy; and an infinite progression – which is the corresponding image adopted by the understanding – on the very face of it only repeats and re-enacts the contradiction. (60)

The Idea is not merely compatible but "identical in difference" with "all the changing scenes of life" as proposed by evolution. Poetry rises to an expressive grasp of this in its conception of "a world", effectively the world, "in a grain of sand". The Idea is not particularised in its filling, its absorption, completely in each case, of all particulars. Thus all angels of the Lord tend to merge with the Lord himself, as Hegel shows awareness of in his discussion, his exposition, of the Trinity, saying "it is useless to count". *Numeri non ponuntur in divinis*, Aquinas also had declared. This must be so in an outlook that leads us on to say: "This also is thou, neither is this thou". Thus the things of nature are "neither one nor many" (Plato).

By the same reasoning, though, the Idea is purely logical, ultimately purely spiritual, as we say of God: “God is a spirit” (“the lesson of Christianity”, Hegel claims). By this “purely”, however, nothing is withdrawn from Spirit. That is to say, what appears to be withdrawn from spirit is nothing. So, for the ultimate metaphysics, Aquinas claimed, body, for example now, is not a concept, as it is, he says, for the logician, along, as emerges in Hegel’s exposition, with those finite categories properly called logical as making up truth’s own dialectical method, whereby spirit results as from itself. “In my beginning is my end”; as religion represents this, the former being thus ever consumed or made null, which is a way of saying that its true significance is thus revealed.

The End, then, is accomplished (*Enc.* 212, add.). Only out of the illusion or error that this is not so, created by the Idea itself in its method of development, does the truth of this “arise”, as property of “ungrateful spirit”. Hegel thinks that Kant’s remarks on this theme, in their very falling short of it, lead us

to conceive a different relation between the universal of understanding and the particular of perception, than that on which the theory of the Theoretical and Practical Reason is founded (56).

But this, in Kant, “is not supplemented by a recognition that the former is the genuine relation and the very truth”. Yet “Such an Idea evidently radically transforms the relation which the understanding institutes between means and ends, between subjectivity and objectivity” (58). This last duo is especially significant, since for Hegel it will be Being itself that is Subject and not Substance. Dualism will be overcome in the sovereignty of mind alone. For “our knowledge of a limit can only be when the unlimited is on this side in consciousness”. This, indeed, is the basis for the perennial doctrine of an “innate idea” of the infinite, of God. This, Hegel generously affirms, Kant has made possible.

Henceforth the principle of the independence of Reason, or of its absolute self-subsistence, is made a general principle of philosophy, as well as a foregone conclusion of the time (60)

Reason, “the absolute inwardness of thought... absolutely refused to accept or indulge anything possessing the character of an externality.” Later Hegel expounds this as meaning that Outside and Inside are in effect the same.

But Good, - which is thus put forward as the higher cause of the world, - has been already described as only our good, the moral law of our Practical Reason. This being so, the unity in question goes no further than to make the state of the world and the course of its events harmonise with our moral standards... But, further, this harmony is met by the revival and re-assertion of the antithesis, which it by its own principle (sc. that of the Idea) had nullified. The harmony is then described as merely subjective, something which merely ought to be, and which at the same time is not real, - a mere article of faith, possessing a subjective certainty, but without truth, or that objectivity which is proper to the Idea. This contradiction may seem to be disguised by adjourning the realisation of the Idea to a future, to a time when the Idea will also be. But a sensuous condition like time is the reverse of a reconciliation of the discrepancy; and an infinite progression - which is the corresponding image adopted by the understanding - on the very face of it only repeats and re-enacts the contradiction. (60, parenthesis added, italics not in the original).

One wonders if Catherine Malabou, in her generally excellent study, *The Future of Hegel*, took full account of this passage. Time is "a sensuous condition" as much as those "nows" we represent as succeeding one another in it. This succession of the "nows" is itself representation, appearance, a phenomenal "now" posited between the supposed thought of a previous and of an ensuing "now". This is precisely what Hegel combats imaginatively, as a preliminary, with his repeated image of a gallery of pictures or statues, when speaking of history generally or, alternatively, specifically of philosophy. One has of course to walk in time through such a gallery (as in Moussorgsky's piano piece) and thus the contradiction of the picture is exposed, only resolvable in the Idea as ultimate "free variable" not so much containing, as in a finitude, but as absorbing (Hegel's word) all in thus being all. Unlike the free variable, an abstraction, it remains itself in any such individual "cashing out". This is what Hegel's method of logic claims to demonstrate.

The role of sensuous time, all the same, constitutes a central touchstone for Hegel's thought, at the beginning as at the end. He thus explains the revelation of Absolute Being as "this individual human being", set to be raised and glorified, becoming "a living spirit", as the same process as that "found in sense existence". Just as being "the immediately present God" this individual's "being passes over into His having been". Here too it might seem as if it is time itself that conditions being, at its humblest or most exalted indifferently. Yet the individuals, with whom this individual, Hegel recognises, is traditionally and by the logic of such revelation as is here considered severally identified, only go out of time as first having come down into it, when "time's up", as we say. Hegel, all the same, sees

realisation that “The divine nature is the same as the human” as “the simple content of Absolute Religion”. Here too, however, the sensuous and hence temporal (“the things which are seen are temporal”) is given what seems to be a prime logical role. In descending to it, the sensuous and temporal, the Absolute Being has “attained for the first time its highest nature”. This should not be confused with “process theology” on a “realist” model; the “time” is a logical or conceptual occurrence or moment, such that, for example, it is only in this “lowest” that the “highest” is revealed as just that.

That the Supreme Being is seen, heard, etc., as an existent self-consciousness, - this is, in very truth, the culmination and consummation of its notion.

In fact it is only in this revelation or unveiling, he seems to say, that Existence, as a finite logical category, comes to apply, albeit in momentary representation, to the Divine Being. Thus Aquinas too focuses upon whether God is: *utrum Deus sit*. He does not discuss any “existence of God” in the first instance. This is also perhaps the most affected feature of the identification of existence with essence, in God; that a form of sublation, be it mutual or one-way, is identified.

*

What, though, has this to do with the postulated Kantian “inner design” (*Critique of Judgment*, 62)? It seems it might just as well or better be referred to what Aristotle affirms of soul or life-principle (e.g. at *De anima* 415b 7), saying that things “share in the everlasting and divine” not by numerical persistence but by persistence of species. Such continuous reproduction is nature’s arranging itself in relation to eternity which, Hegel stresses, is the same as eternity’s arranging this arrangement: “what persists is not the thing itself but something like itself”, Aristotle remarks. We recall at once Plato saying, in *Meno*, that “all nature is akin” or (thus) related, adding, as, on his premises, a clear correlate: “and the soul has learned everything”. Aristotle had said earlier, in *On the Soul*: “It is, then, because of this first principle that living things have life”. What else is this “inner design? “That which has soul is distinguished from that which has not (soul) but life”, of which it is “principle” (413a 20-25¹). All the same,

¹ Our learned Victorian translator, William Wallace, refers us, in his note to *Enc.* 204, to these two places in Aristotle’s study (the only readable book on the soul, according to Hegel) in direct parallel to Kant’s text on “inner design”.

might we not ask, do not rocks and streams have a certain soul or inner design (as the stream's principle is its source), in virtue perhaps of the first principle or design, or soul, easily convertible in thought to designer or active principle – too easily though if we forget the element of analogy, of individual with universal in this case, analogy, however, whereby they are indeed or concretely the same. But then one must take the whole picture, as we say, and then we have again design, on larger canvas, as principle of substantiality. Upon this “must” what we may call the Hegelian “airiness” or large-mindedness is founded, as a freedom given by and of necessity.

But just as it is hard to see the difference between Aristotle's soul or life-principle and life itself, of which it is postulated as cause, so it is difficult to see the ultimate force of the difference between this inner and all outer design, bearing in mind, however, in self-justification for this our difficulty, that Hegel himself declares that the Inward is the Outward and contrariwise. This, in fact, is his whole principle of incarnation, which he declares is religion itself in philosophical aspect, referring us again to the (ana-logically) logical role of sense, the sensuous, at the beginning of thought and in some sense base of the Idea, in terms of which, ultimately, the human is the divine, in no way intending by this a simple Feuerbachian reduction (if that is just to Feuerbach?). Compare Blake's expression, “the human form divine”. No one at all alert thinks this is a reduction. It is pronounced elevation, rather, revealed and not merely gratuitously bestowed, as religion has tended to urge in abstraction from or denial of the necessity, though necessity is anyhow founded upon divine or absolute freedom. There could not even be a more basic necessity, not even necessary being, since such freedom founds just that in the perfection of its negativity Nothing can, i.e. nothing cannot, be more nugatory than that, without ceasing to be even anything conceivable, i.e. ceasing to be period. But nothing that is not is not even nothing. This is the deep reason behind Hegel's presentation of being at and as the beginning of logical science, before later identifying it, with the Dominican or more Aristotelian Scholastics, as act of acts, as absolute entelechy, at the close of that *sae Science of Logic*. Nor is this, I trust, impiety, since it rather removes the finite or subject-object element clinging to the very notion of gift, of the gratuitous. Thomas Aquinas does the same when he applies gift, *donum*, as a (or the) name for the (Holy) Spirit. It is in this sense that absolutely everything is gift or grace (K. Rahner), that the human form is divine before it is its diurnal self, inclusive of nutrition, sensation, reproduction, so to say, while having that divine or absolute spark at the base of all mind or truth, more truly a world even than the same poet's phenomenal grain of

sand. Or rather, that is the only truth of the grain of sand, in identity of context transcending all representation of quantity. In this way the “bad infinite” expires into the good of its own momentum as leading us speculatively to it:

Big fleas have little fleas
Upon their backs to bite’em
And little fleas have smaller fleas
And so *ad infinitum*.

The physicists are thus bound to find that there is no stopping at the Higgs particle, at today’s insight or, by courtesy of today’s ephemeral instruments, even of sight itself ultimately (they *read* the instruments), to find that physics itself, abstracted from what comes after, meta-physics, is tied to this bad infinite, good, however, in its badness (cp. Hegel on Good and Evil) as being set of itself to such expiry.

But are we thus, in this light-hearted manner, beginning to answer the question with which we opened this section? I think so. The enquiry, in fact, is not so much an appeal for a return to teleology as, rather, a verging on the speculative ablation of teleology, of means and ends as such. The goal is the final submersion, in mutual identity of contraries, of means and end together in the Idea. That there is necessarily just one end, as End as such, Hegel hardly pauses to demonstrate. Aquinas had shown that there is just one End, necessarily sought, to human and all life, to every and any human action, or living process even, as in the End evoking and/or provoking it, as also evil is made Satan’s good, necessarily again. Yet is not this the most ambitious deconstruction of all? Hegel, again, has a word for it: “the factual is normative”. Or, as Wittgenstein insisted: “Philosophy leaves everything as it is”. To write philosophy thus becomes the most thankless of tasks and philosophy’s own greatest enemy.

Thus Hegel credits Kant with first liberating mind from a false empiricism (this though is Kant’s otherwise reprehensible dualism), seeing mind as its own result, own place, without relation to anything outside of it, in what, however, he also sees as a return to Aristotle, or Plato rather, to the view of mind as “the place of forms” or, less figuratively, *forma formarum*, form as such, inner design indeed. Whether we should detect irony here, a damning with faint praise, let each one decide for his or her self.

CHAPTER FIVE

UNBOUNDED PHILOSOPHY AND ITS DETRACTORS

In the first of the three parts of *The Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, called "The Science of Logic" (and followed by "Philosophy of Nature" and "Philosophy of Mind"), Hegel leads into the Idea¹ with, as third division of the Object, after Mechanism and Chemism, a discussion entitled "Teleology". It is important to bear in mind that none of these names can be assumed identical in sense with any meaning they might otherwise naturally have. The Object, anyhow, is itself been preceded by the Subjective Notion, under which logical forms in general, as categories, are treated² and variously exposed as finite and hence inconsistent with themselves beyond a certain point.

¹ This, "The Idea", after "The Subjective Notion" and "The Object", forms the third and final part of the third part of this treatise on logic, viz. the "Doctrine of the Notion" or concept, after the "Doctrine of Being" and the "doctrine of Essence".

² The whole work is called the "science" and not the "philosophy" exclusively of logic, while Hegel expressly discounts that knowledge of the logical "forms" constitute more than a moment of this science, the moment of the Subjective Notion, comprised in *Enc.* 163-193 or in thirty out of a total of two hundred and twenty-six paragraphs making up the "science of logic" or first part of the tripartite *Encyclopaedia*, while the initial eighteen paragraphs are an introduction to this whole work, as is obscured the format used in some translations. These forms and their employment, were earlier called *ars logica*, though this term was later extended to the whole science by John of St. Thomas. In contrast to Hegel, who treated the theme of linguistic signs in an addition to "Philosophy of Mind", John (Poinsot) included in this treatise on the logical art (*Ars logica*) an important treatment of "signs", whether verbal or "formal" signs (*verba interiora*), i.e. concepts, as part of what was called *logica utens*. The science of logic, however, includes the potentially metaphysical *logica docens* or philosophy of logic, thus potentially "first" philosophy under a certain controlling viewpoint. Hegel thus pre-dates Frege in seeing pure logic itself as an ontology, though for him logic has not two but three (inseparable) sides, the abstract, the dialectical and the

Under teleology Hegel naturally treats of "the end" or of end in general. Here it is impossible to prescind from the work of his immediate predecessor Immanuel Kant. Kant closed his *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Morals*, an accurate enough title, with the theory of the Kingdom of Ends, which is in fact the human race or, rather, the assembly of any rational creatures, real or ideal. Real or ideal? This is precisely what Hegel develops. In his philosophy it emerges that the real and the ideal are not to be immediately separated without further ado, as we tend to do in everyday speech. Thus if, for him, everything finite is as such ideal (*Enc.* 95) yet that crucial moment and therefore representation, insofar as it is abstractly individualised, of Mind, viz. the human mind, is or appears at once finite and not finite (infinite: cf. *The Phenomenology of Mind*, tr. Baillie p. 777: "the character of thought, where the moments as much *are* as they *are not*, - are only the process which is Spirit... this unity is the universality of self-consciousness").

The ends, that is, are persons, the persons ends. One might miss this if one forgot the background. In everyday speech an end cannot be a person. It is rather a thing or, perhaps more exactly, an act, process even. The miser's having the money, rather than the money itself, is the miser's end, it is argued. Such a mere point of lexicography, however, cannot be used as real or philosophical argument against the theory of persons as ends.³

End, though, implies, as Hegel brings out, that all else is for the sake of the end, which means for the sake of the persons individually considered. It is the philosophical equivalent of the Pauline "All things are yours". St. Paul adds "and you are God's". This must be understood otherwise than as making of the human or "created" end a means all over again, which would be contradictory. That is, the Biblical representation of potter and clay requires refining, here where the substance, clay, as "material" cause, is equally efficient, formal and final cause of itself as both potter and pot or, as God is the other of himself, so is this other God, who thus includes all as nothing other than himself, the reverse, therefore, of pantheism, since all else is not God but nothing. The moments, that is, are but moments, not substantial, still less "accidental" (in *any* sense). He or she

speculative, three moments, namely, of every logical entity, concept or truth whatever, but firstly of the Concept itself (finally the Idea).

³ In my earlier *Morals as Founded on Natural Law*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt, 1987, however, I myself thus appealed thus to ordinary speech, as if Kant, say, would not himself have been aware of the departure from usage. Persons can be and are ends just the same and we knew it before philosophy grounded it formally. Is it then an "innate idea" a cognitive potential? Has the soul "learned everything" (Plato, *Meno*). In Hegel's view, as he explains (*Enc.* 67), certainly

then, among persons, is unconditionally an end. Upon nothing else can the *absolute* reprobation of murder depend. Even the soldier in war, therefore, is not required to masquerade as or make of himself or others a means (to murder). This truth, furthermore, conditions all theory of sacrifice. Recourse to a merely ethical recommendation of *epieicheia* (equity) will not remove the difficulty here entirely, dependent upon the truth that that whatever is *an* end is *the* end, namely. The work of the soldier, rather, has to be included under, has to include, now by active participation, should the moment arise, at least as possible consequence, the "ruin of the individual" or of many individuals as finitely abstract, as a true moment of logic (cp. *Enc.* 216-222, also 213 on "the ruin of the individual").

To be for God, in other words, is the true way of being for oneself as all are for one another in identity. In loving we are indeed loved. The Franciscan prayer stating this names a literal truth. This is why we do not make ourselves means to the happiness of others in seeking it but rather fulfil ourselves as ends. Such, anyhow, was manifestly Hegel's view, in full accord with New Testament vistas, "accomplishing" but not "rationalising" them.

This full dependence upon Kantianism, to the point of taking into his dialectic Kant's most idiosyncratic category, as it might look, is the more surprising in view of the general temperamental opposition, so to say, of Kantian and Hegelian philosophy. The latter seeks above all things to overcome "the petty strictures of the Critique", to restore to the world a confidence in reason which Kant had pretended to rebuke or remove.⁴

To see this we can look at any number of later thinkers, or schools, which have followed Kant, or at least engaged in dialogue with him, while ignoring or, literally, not knowing, Hegel and what Schopenhauer called his maddening obscurity. Strange, therefore, that we have eased some of the obscurity precisely by referring it back to Kant! One can think of

⁴ But see the final paragraphs of *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* III for Hegel's final placing of Kant in his pantheon of true philosophers, subsumed under the moment of Enlightenment as a whole, where "thought begins to place itself in opposition to the concrete". Precisely as realising itself the Spiritual Community falls into disruption. Its "realisation is its disappearance". Thus, when "the unity of outer and inner no longer exists in immediate consciousness" it means that "the time for speculative justification is reached", for the taking wing of the "owl of Minerva". Implied here is an important reconciliation of the esoteric and the exoteric, implicit, one might argue, in the modern or democratic spirit as then (1830) in its birthpangs still. Yet, Hegel insists, this kind of difficulty is not philosophy's business. "For us philosophical knowledge has harmonised this discord". The "process of thought then consists in carrying through this opposition until it reaches reconciliation" which "is philosophy... is theology".

Frege, Husserl, the "analytical" philosophers generally, even the Roman Catholic school of "transcendental Thomism", which thinks, rightly, that some notice must be taken of the Kantian objections to the old "dogmatic" approach. Of Hegel, however, these latter will know nothing. That, in contrast, knowing Hegel, was the mistake, the offence, of the "ontologists", a group long since banished from Catholic respectability. In fact they, as taking up the Protestant Hegelian torch in Italy itself, were arguably the proximate cause, by reaction, of the papally sponsored retreat back to the thirteenth century, though not of course to that century as present. One cannot thus retreat and the great St. Thomas has been "turning in his grave" (he had no grave) ever since. He looks to Hegel, I would argue, for his vindication.

One such Kantian thinker whom I would single out here is Hannah Arendt. I will focus on her youthful but much acclaimed article, "What is *Existenz* Philosophy?"⁵ Arendt is fully aware of Hegel, but sees Kant as having refuted him in advance. This leads her into positions shown up as unsatisfactory at every step precisely by Hegel.

Existenz philosophy she sees as stemming from Kierkegaard, and everything she says (p.43) seems to show up the superficiality of this thinker's reading of Hegel.

To the Hegelian system, which pretended to grasp and explain the "whole", he opposed the "single person", the individual man, for whom neither place nor meaning was left in the Whole directed by the World-Mind.

But for Hegel the whole and the single person are opposed, no more, implicitly, than they could be in the Kantian theory of End consistently taken. A clue to this is that Hegel speaks of universality and individuality indifferently, along with particularity, as "moments" of the one notion or concept, which is itself "the whole".⁶ Individual and actual are, in fact, "the same thing" while "the whole" is the ultimate individual with which each person, each consciousness, is identified. The "I" which is, so to say, the most general of universals, the universal in fact, is precisely not "only an 'I' as object of thought".⁷ It is, rather, "the truly living 'I'", except for one thing.

This one thing is life itself, in Hegel's dialectic a purely finite category falling short of the Idea, which supersedes it rather. It is not, that is to say, fully real and true. It is merely because we cling so to life that we

⁵ *The Partisan Review* (New York), 1946, No. 1, Vol. 13, pp. 34-56.

⁶ Hegel, *Enc.* 163.

⁷ Arendt: *op. cit.* p.39.

transpose the name, taken from organic existence, to mental and spiritual reality generally. Hegel is unambiguous: "...the principle of personality is universality". Hence it is "man as man" that can be "recognised as of infinite worth and to have infinite rights." Arendt's argument, on the other hand, depends upon the false if prevalent assumption of the essential contingency of the individual:

The individual finds himself in permanent contradiction to this explained world, since his "Existenz", namely the pure factual character of his existing in all its contingency (that, precisely, I am I and no one else, and that, precisely, I am rather than am not), can be neither foreseen by reason nor resolved into something purely thinkable.⁸

This assertion derives from her thesis, or previous assertion, that the "unity of Being and thought", which "presupposed the pre-established coincidence of essence and existence, that namely, everything thinkable also exists and every existent, because it is knowable, must also be rational... was destroyed by Kant." These are precisely the assertions that the Hegelian "science of logic" not so much refuted as relativised in the generation succeeding to Kant's.⁹

Thus what we have, in Hegel, is not a dualistic unity of being and thought but, as in Aristotle, a sure inclusion of being within thought, a supremacy of truth over being. Truth "overlaps" being, the soul the body¹⁰, and so on. The rational is the real and, as in the Augustinian doctrine of the divine ideas, each and every notion or idea is identical with the divine essence, is one with the whole. "The principle of personality is universality."

The Notion... is a systematic whole, in which each of its constituent functions is the very total which the notion is, and is put as indissolubly one with it.¹¹

Arendt is content to dismiss the Hegelian coherence here as "weird".¹² This is but an indication that her various attempts to rise above the arena of political philosophy, and even a certain partisanship, tended to be half-hearted. Thus in her magnificent effort to understand totalitarianism she

⁸ *op. cit.* p.43.

⁹ Cp. note 4 above.

¹⁰ Cp. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* VII.

¹¹ Hegel: *op. cit.* 160. Hegel goes on to remark, in effect, that Being "is but a constituent stage in the Idea."

¹² Arendt: *op. cit.* p.34.

falls back upon a metaphysically untenable or, so to say, "immediate" notion of radical evil, exactly as did the psychologist C.G. Jung in his discussions with Thomist thinkers. Evil, says St. Thomas, bluntly and, one might think, irrefutably, *semper est in subjecto*, is always in a (good) subject. The presupposition is that any subject, as substantial and entitative, is good. Here one speaks not of *bonum honestum* merely, but of *bonum simpliciter*. No actions of Hitler, Stalin or whomever can suddenly or as it were contingently overturn such considerations. Conversely, evil-doing can never reach rock bottom, never be radical, but is always parasitic upon good.

The same observation applies to her unreflected acceptance of human contingency. To love someone, one might say, is to know that they are not contingent, in the relevant sense of having arisen by blind chance alone. Here belong Hegel's discussions of the "cunning" of reason and of the sense in which necessity is not after all blind. Men, he says, have their own ends but these are simply swept aside by the purpose of universal reason, which is the ultimate individual as set to "gather all things into one", in the Scriptural phrase. Philosophically viewed, all things are one. Speculations about evolutionary ups and downs, therefore, or the chance unions of sperm and egg, or even those of this or that individual, do not belong in philosophy. In so far as necessity is shown not to be blind it coincides with absolute freedom and in this sense the world, the creation, is not contingent. This, in effect, is his answer to the drawing of finally sceptical conclusions from Kant's in his view not finally systematic philosophy.

It is often forgotten that the discussion of immortality in philosophy made no distinction regarding spiritual reality before or after life, regarding birth or death. The individual, as an idea in the divine mind, is one with the divine essence (see Aquinas, *Summa theol.* Ia 15), which is incomposite but, equally, as infinite, necessarily differentiated. This in turn implies that in absolute reality the relation of idea to reality or "thing" is precisely inverted. Any other theory of "the idea" would be anthropomorphic simply. In "overlapping" the phenomenal entity the idea is the more real and is in no sense abstract. Anything not true to its idea, and this applies ultimately to all things finite, is false. Being, as existence (*Existenz?*), is not the final category and so Hegel treats existence formally in his mediating "doctrine of essence".¹³ In the final and third part of his conception, by contrast, Hegel writes that

¹³Hegel, *op. cit.* 123, but see also 213, "Because it has no existence..." Cf. Ivor Leclerc, "God and the Issue of Being", *Religious Studies* 20, 1984, pp. 64-78, where the historical development of the idea of existence is traced, rather than

Because it has no existence for starting-point... the Idea is frequently treated as a mere logical form. Such a view must be abandoned to those theories, which ascribe so-called reality and genuine actuality to the existent thing and all the other categories which have not yet penetrated as far as the Idea. It is no less false to imagine the Idea to be mere abstraction... in its own self it is essentially concrete... giving character to itself, and that character, reality.¹⁴

If Kierkegaard represented a revolt, an anti-thesis, to Hegel then we need to ask, in the context of Arendt's thinking, how far the Heideggerian development simply enshrines this opposition or, rather, might reconcile it to the Kantian and Hegelian, even Aristotelian stream, as Arendt denies. In saying "the universal is staked as the individual" Kierkegaard seems unconscious of how Hegel's thought establishes just that, in the way we have indicated. That every individual is an "exception" is really the same as saying that "the principle of personality is the universal" or that each person is an end, has the unity within himself in his necessarily unique manner. If, though, it were not the same unity in every case then persons could not all be ends or "members one of another" as religion, here "accomplished" by philosophy, has it.

Every individual being is some one aspect of the Idea: for which, therefore, yet other actualities are needed, which in their turn appear to have a self-subsistence of their own. It is only in them altogether and in their relation that the notion is realised. The individual by itself does not correspond to its notion. It is this limitation of its existence which constitutes the finitude and the ruin of the individual.¹⁵

"I live yet not I..." "Except the seed die..." If we try to maintain the hermetic sealing off of religious notions as impenetrable mysteries before "natural" reason we condemn religion more and more to future incredibility, if that were possible. What Kierkegaard and Heidegger bring into the foreground is "anxiety before death". Hegel had simply observed

taken as given merely. One can also consult Buddhist thought: "No birth no death".

¹⁴ Hegel: *op. cit.*, 213. No one shows better the continuity of Hegelian thought with Thomas Aquinas's concerns than Henry Veatch, who himself gives no evidence of having studied Hegel. See his "Concerning the Ontological Status of Logical Forms", *Review of Metaphysics*, December 1948, pp. 40-64, or "Formalism and/or Intentionality in Logic", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* XI, 1950-51, pp. 348-365.

¹⁵ Hegel: *op. cit.* 213.

that life "runs away", due to its own inner contradictions, so that death was something the free and hence reasonable man need neither fear nor think about.¹⁶ But of course most of us do think about it and it is true, as they stress, that the thought somehow constitutes our being in the world. How then are we to view such being? That is the question, which Hegel, as it were in passing, answers. The idea of Heidegger's that one is "thrown" into existence is something of a rhetorical metaphor. To be thrown one has to be there beforehand. He maybe willy-nilly implies this. The metaphor, however, might seem to presume the contrary. As proof of the "nothingness" of man's "being", however, this obsession, besiegement as we might say, is in continuity with Hegel's thought, but as a fragment thus far detached from the edifice. It does not, that is, "accomplish religion", as Hegel claimed was constitutive of true philosophy, as also fulfilling *artistic* or aesthetic insight. At one level, indeed, this is an aesthetic matter and Hegel's philosophy is not less itself than an aesthetic, even if it is in no sense "merely" such. The thought is in the style: this post-modern insight is also there in germ, supporting Hegel's ecumenical commitment to both the unity of philosophies and, *mutatis mutandis*, of philosophy with religion, since it, his philosophy, is equally theology.

Arendt goes on to consider the Heideggerian substitution, as she sees it, of the self for "man". This was indeed the kernel of Descartes' meditations, as Hegel points out in his lectures on the history of philosophy. He finds traces of it, though, in Boehme, Eckhart and earlier. It is implicit, again, in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* VII.¹⁷ Rather than a latter-day subversion of humanism, as she suggests, this is a part of the properly philosophical endeavour as such. Reading Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* one is struck by how he holds fast to the picture Gilson and others would teach us to see as prejudiced. Hegel's view is indeed that Descartes uniquely re-awakened a true philosophic spirit sleeping, apart from its vivid dream-life in relatively unsystematic "mystics" such as Eckhart and Boehme¹⁸, for a thousand years or more. He fastens upon the Cartesian "I", which, Hegel points out, designates consciousness and not an individual. This, he claims, was the meaning of the Socratic, Platonic

¹⁶ The Hegelian thinker, J.M.E. McTaggart, d.1927, had this insight of Spinoza's inscribed upon his tomb.

¹⁷ Cf. on this point F. Inciarte, "Die Einheit der aristotelischen Metaphysik", *Philosophisches Jahrbuch*, 1994, 1 *Halbband*, pp. 1-24. The same priority to self over man, however, can be found in Newman, d.1890, when he says he is more certain of God's reality and existence than that he has hands or feet.

¹⁸ Or its foreshadowing in Proclus, Scotus Eriugena and others.

and indeed oracular "Know yourself" of the Greeks.¹⁹ The same awareness of the literally infinite value of subjectivity lies, he points out, in the primitive Christian affirmation, however explained away by some of its foremost apologists, that "God wills that all men be saved".²⁰

*

In showing that "the meaning of Being is nothingness"²¹ Heidegger concurs in Hegel's verdict that Being is "not a whit better" than the non-being of the Buddhists. Yet Heidegger also says that Being's meaning is temporality, which suggests an identity of time and nothing, i.e. that time is impossible, as McTaggart insisted.

Being is "the nothing", in Heidegger's thinking, because, like essence, it is a finite idea. That is, it is a category with which we should stop thinking in any absolute sense. We should "think with the concept" or notion. It is not really a matter of identifying what being is, as Heidegger seems to suggest. *This very question depends upon the category one wants to be open to calling in question.* For what is being, one asks, using, that is, the verb "to be".

With being there disappears the given. Even I, the subject, am not given, but am self-caused, *causa sui*, and thus a result, the reality revealed where dialectical shadows end and where I "know myself".²² God has to be this, as do I, if he is absolute freedom, not given or passively finding himself there. I create and re-create my memories. That is, they are inseparable from interpretation. But what do they interpret, unless interpretation again? That is, they are a self-development *in infinitum* and, just therefore, perfectly realised, exactly as the Divine Word of theology is ceaselessly being uttered, since this uttering is *what the Father is*. It is open to me to deny both birth and death, which is the same as to remove myself from the phenomenal sphere, which is the same as to see things from the absolute point of view, the point of both philosophy and science. It is also the point

¹⁹ Cf. R.D. Laing, *The Facts of Life*, Penguin, Harmondsworth 1977 (Allen Lane 1976), p.19f: "For as long as I can remember I was trying to figure out how I got here, what I was doing here, why was I here, why were other people here... Where is here?... I don't think I ever thought I was the I that thinks it's me..."

²⁰ Hegel: *op. cit.* 147, subtext.

²¹ Arendt, p.46.

²² I know myself in God's knowing himself. "The eye with which I see God is the eye with which God sees me", an insight no more astonishing, since it is the same, than Augustine's reference, in *Confessions*, to the one closer to the finite subject than that subject is to itself, *intimior me mihi*.

of theology. "For you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God" (a phrase Wordsworth found particularly applicable to lunatics! Well, they get there first, as being last).

If we create or beget (one another) unconsciously (we don't re-member it) then we can choose to die unconsciously. Yet life of itself includes death, so we have to die as expression of being alive. But then, equally, we have to be born (as expression of any immortality: the necessity of time, but "for as long as spirit needs it"), as we also noted in discussing contingency. That is, we are necessary beings, loved or in mutual love ("it is in loving that we are loved") from all eternity. This is our proper reality, in straying from which the evanescently phenomenal and finite shows its falsity. Contrary to popular supposition the ideal or absolute is the true and the real, as against the merely finitely "ideal" or momentary (*Enc.* 95), as is implicit in the very idea of both religion and philosophy, the war, which is prophecy, of "the things which are not seen" upon "the things which are seen". Art too is essentially the correction of vision, a result striven for. It is what the lover, praised by Socrates in *Phaedrus*, essentially discovers, the "narrow path".

*

Arendt's bondage to pre-Hegelian Kantianism is nowhere clearer than in her interpretation of, or identification with, Karl Jaspers, express allegiance to whom (at this stage of her life) ends this early but important article on "Existenz philosophy". Jaspers is "more modern", in that he "yields more clues for contemporary philosophical thinking than Heidegger." He frees one from Heidegger, she seems to mean. The price is that he "relativises all philosophical systems", judging them to be flights from real "existential" questions.²³ This can seem a psychologist's impertinence. One recalls Alasdair MacIntyre's *a priori* objection to "formulated doctrines of the Whole" as a pretext for marginalising Aquinas's unsurpassable doctrine of virtue in his own *After Virtue*, an objection he was quick to renounce in his later work. Hegel indeed, more tolerantly than Jaspers, judged all philosophies to be true but without sacrificing his own natural right to have the last word (to date) upon them. To date, since it is absurd to claim he thought he had materially "completed" philosophy for all time. Jaspers, one feels, makes it too easy for himself in thus joining forces with the unphilosophical crowd of

²³ Arendt refers to Jaspers' *Psychologie der Weltanschauung*. She herself is careful, perhaps too careful, to distinguish *Existenz* philosophy from existentialism as "a French literary movement".

psychologists, social scientists and others, ever eager to discredit such noble striving, i.e. when they dispute the primacy of philosophy.

Jaspers, all the same, finds just such systematic "formulations" fundamentally un-philosophical and not merely psychologically symptomatic. They "drain the experience of extreme situations". This might apply in some cases, as Hegel himself points out yet more forcefully (the "concrete universal"), but Jaspers illegitimately universalises an ever-present possibility (of untrue rationalisation) here, a ploy which can easily be turned back upon his own system or Kierkegaard's, whose presentations of Hegel are thus easily faulted.

There is an analogy between Jaspers seeking "to dissolve" philosophy and the critical, meta-philosophical or dialectical undertaking of Kant or Hegel. That is all. It is the analogy between psychology, more clinical than "rational", and philosophy. There is, again, only analogy between Socratic maieutic and Jaspers' "appeal", which produces no baby. Far from being dissoluble, philosophy indeed produces results, such that final truth is for Hegel itself a result, which is why the whole dialectic has to be gone through to find it. There is a parallel, explicit, with the New Law of Christian theology as having to be propounded (revealed) *via* experience of the "Old Law" and of other things, as Marcion had denied. In this way philosophy "accomplishes" religion and its "results".

It is not that "the philosopher has deprived himself of every specialized prerogative." He never had it. There never could be a "technical" philosophical language, marking it off from speech as a whole. He has ever felt free to make it up as he goes along. In this sense the "playfulness" of metaphysics is no discovery of Jaspers, though one can credit him for seeing this. "The notion is pure play", says Hegel, echoing the age-old depiction of wisdom in the Biblical book *Proverbs*. Between necessary result and infinite freedom there is no conflict, but necessary connection. To talk about the That in separation from the What, as something that "cannot be resolved into thought" (cf. the unknowable "thing in itself"), illustrates again the contradictory finitude of analytical reason (*Verstand*) as compared with *sapientia*, *Vernunft*. These two are distinguished but not separated, whether in Plato, Aquinas or Hegel.

Arendt refers to "the fact that I have not created myself", which is just what is in question for philosophy. "That I cannot resolve the real to the object of thought becomes the triumph of possible freedom"; of the mob, one might rather say. Philosophy, like poetry and all thinking, seeks not to resolve but to re-veal, by "thinking itself", the verb here being grammatically transitive. Thought never oversteps itself but is at home everywhere. This is what thought is, the having the other as other. It was

therefore Kant's error to try to overstep thought as itself prime instance of overstepping. This led to his contradictory claim to know of the unknowable.

Thinking then has no "function" but is the reality, as man himself disappears before spirit or "self". This in religious terms was resurrection, ascension and glorification, which have however to be essentially trans-historical, like the Trinitarian processions themselves. Jaspers introduces the interesting notion of the cipher, e.g. the cipher of transcendence. Its interest though is that it gives us a new term for the steps of the dialectic, each of which is a more inclusive cipher of the final result than the previous. The term underlines that only the final result is real. But Jaspers offers no final result unless man himself in his *Existenz*. This "foundering of thought" is indeed failure and is no more acceptable than Kant's contradictory attempt to place "bounds" to reason. The two projects are in fact identical.²⁴

As regards the *Existenz* of others, one does not in philosophy appeal merely to human togetherness. Parmenides affirmed early on that being has no parts. Rather, one wins through to the notion of unity in identity as the only possible account of thinking, a view receiving uncanny confirmation in recent theories within physics and related fields of enquiry.

²⁴ Cf. Kant's title: *Religion within the Bounds of Reason Alone*.

CHAPTER SIX

HEGEL: WITH WHAT MUST SCIENCE BEGIN? A COMMENTARY

"With What Must Science Begin?" - a Paraphrase with Commentary of Hegel's Introductory to *Die Lehre vom Sein*, Book One of *Wissenschaft der Logik* (ed. Suhrkamp 5, Frankfurt 1969, pp. 65-79).

We begin here, like philosophy itself (Parmenides), with being. At the end being is self-certainty, faith and even devotion (*Enc.* 555), "spiritual liberation", "the actuality of the spirit", actuality without qualification, that is to say. This is the "self-centred identity" of Absolute Mind (*Enc.* 554). That is to say, being is self-known as Freedom. This self-understanding, however, is to us, to finite mind, the "road" (553) of subjective and objective spirit (mind) successively, method, necessarily beginning with the first open and empty concept of Being which is in fact the one and only Concept or Form as not yet identified with the Content. Such Content is not a definition of Being, but the Content simply and absolutely, the self-knowing, that is, of this very being. It is as being that personality is finally self-understood. This is made clearer in McTaggart's philosophy. A first adumbration of this whole scheme, however, was laid down in the *Summa theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas and, before that, the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle and, ultimately, Parmenides. The manifestation of this, as Good News, witnesses, as it were in passing, to reasoned philosophy as phenomenal abstraction from whole and simple knowing of knowing as "truth in its philosophic phase" (552)¹. This writing here, therefore, is

¹ For Hegel as for Marx who, like McTaggart, learned from him, philosophy serves a process of liberation as, in Aristotle's words, here finding explanation: "Contemplation (*theoria*) is the highest praxis". This liberation, however, is fulfilled or comes to its term in liberation even from life (*bios*) as the "idea immediate" only. Life however remains the figure for the Absolute in such sayings as "I am come that they may have life". This is further specified in saying "This is

phenomenal, a shadow, a "formal sign" not knowable in itself. In Plato's words "all nature is akin", ultimately identical, "and the soul has learned everything" (*Meno*). The desire of man or woman, of Spirit rather, Aristotle adds, is to know. In this knowing all Spirit is made absolute, "forgetting" all that was particular as thus made non-being, rising, as it were, to that "new" existence that was and is forever "accomplished" (212, *Zus.*). This is the true explanation of any possible experience, from which any finite subject, as is glimpsed by Origen and others, is as it were "fallen". Finally, then, "no birth no death" (Buddhist saying). This is the philosophical truth of philosophy's own subversion or, if preferred, sublation.

This view is confirmed by Hegel's remarks in the transition to Absolute Spirit after Objective Spirit (553f. as above). He saw it this way. Thus one can also better understand his ascending series at *Enc.* 159, viz. I, free Spirit, Love, Blessedness, to which corresponds the experience of liberation as "existing in an individual form", "developed to its totality", "feeling", "enjoyment". The Notion, he says, elsewhere, "is pure play". This seems to counter disapproving stress upon the mystical as "abstracting the euphoric moment". Euphoria is the heart of the matter, of which philosophy, again, is a "phase" (of truth). This latent mysticism as driving force in Hegel's thinking is caught up and made explicit in McTaggart's later, independent thought, though always acknowledging the

eternal life, to know God". This knowing, as a knowing of knowing itself in its principle, is an identity with all in all in the sense of all in each and each in all. This is traditionally made one with Love, as intrinsically universal. "He who does not love his brother whom he has seen (i.e. anyone), how can he love God whom he has not seen?" Here ethics is fulfilled, sublated rather, in metaphysics. "Inasmuch as you did it to the least, you did it to me." Such is the voice of liberated Spirit, of whom Pilate said "Behold the man", *ecce homo*. This man, like or as consciousness generally, is in all men and hence all are in each as made like to him. "I if I be lifted up will draw all men unto me." Again, this recapitulation of all is, or is to be (eventually it is the same, the factual being normative, the actual reasonable), fulfilled in each. *Seid umschlungen, Millionen*. Religion realises this in term of hidden Christs (e.g. of Hinduism), spiritual baptisms of desire (or blood), spiritual receptions of the "bread of life". In all of such universalisation, in this syllogism, it approaches, loves (philo) or is friend of (*philos*) philo-sophy, or rather sophia as in its very essence a sophia sancta, apart from all else as nullifying and/or transfiguring it and what we have called ourselves. *Seid umschlungen Millionen*. "Love one another", this, no longer either abstracted from the ethical, the practical, or vice versa, is the acme of metaphysics, the "pure play" of the Notion. "If music be the food of love, play on."

main debt to Hegel, than whom, he says, no philosopher has penetrated reality further.

*

1. "The principle of a philosophy expresses also its beginning" (WL, Suhrkamp 5, p.65). This is exactly the ambiguity of *principium*. It expresses this either subjectively (as writing, or personally thinking, a Logic) or objectively, i.e. as the "beginning of all things". Logic, Hegel will say, is creation.

The principle is, unavoidably surely, in some way a definite Content, e.g. "Water, the One, Mind, Idea - Substance, Monad, etc.", or even Thinking, Intuition, Sense-perception, I, Subjectivity itself. This second list, he says, relates rather to the (first) principle of knowledge than, though this is not said, to what is known. In either case we are interested in what determines the Content.

The Beginning as such, as distinct from the principle "expressing" it, remains as a subjective and contingently determined manner of introducing the or a discourse merely. To postulate just a beginning is not to consider any need to ask wherewith one should begin, i.e. beginning itself requires principle. The whole interest lies there, as to what is the true and absolute Ground of all things.

So he refers us to *Enc.* 61, to his "third attitude to objectivity", associated by him with Jacobi, saying that "there is nothing in Heaven, in Nature or in Spirit nor anywhere at all which does not contain both Immediacy and Mediation". We may note the implicit correspondence of Heaven with Logic, later explicitly developed by McTaggart, taking seriously Hegel's naming of three *loci*. Immediacy and mediation are unseparated and inseparable, he says. Their opposition, it seems, as of belief (immediate rather than "justified") and knowledge even, is a nothing. Knowing, he wants to say, is not to be decided upon and/or investigated outside of a process of actual knowing, in Logic, Philosophy of Spirit or Phenomenology indifferently. This is not merely the usual point against Kant, surely. One can see, anyhow, that there is no abstraction or separation from "theology", in the metaphysical sense, imposed here.

2. He is speaking here of the beginning of Knowledge, Science, not of the beginning of the doctrines of Logic. The beginning is, however, will be, logical in that it "should" be made in the element of, be an act of, free thinking "being for itself" or, which is the same, self-postulating, as pure

knowing. By "pure" is meant a knowing of knowing over again, *ad infinitum*, and not of some object. So this is not a postulation of being as act, but of primal act, *actus actuum*, constituting freedom as "principle" or arising of itself, *causa sui*, i.e. no cause but "Ground". This act, rather, *der Tat*, is the primal being, pure but not abstract (containing all else and not taken from it). It is of course only seen as containing (i.e. identified with) all else as the Concept, at the end of the Logic or, which is the same, in the actual Creation or self-manifestation such as Act is. Such Act is actually no beginning at all, as of an impossible prior possibility, but that from which Possibility as category is abstracted. Logic, as Hegel remarked, is creation.

He adds that beginning, this act, is mediated, as pure knowing, as the final because absolute truth of consciousness, as I think, *cogito* one might say, before any object be thought (of). As such it, this mediation, had concluded, made an end of and to Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Mind*, a book setting forth the science of consciousness as prior to any reflexive science of science. That is, it is an impossible book, like to the dreams of one first awakening and wanting to explain, impossibly, where he came from, even though nothing comes from nothing and he doesn't come from anywhere substantive or actual. Thus one cannot be born, as if pre-existent. For then one is beyond any being born. Any limited subjectivity, in other words, is a mirage. This is what Kierkegaard was to resist, as himself mirage *eo ipso*.

This pre-science sets forth, again, or in fact, consciousness as having the Concept of science (*scientia*), active knowing (as *sciens*), as intrinsic "result" of itself. So Logic has this knowing (study) of appearing or phenomenal Spirit, in consciousness, as preconditional to its own actuality, to our knowing of it. The result, that is, is first motor, thus disclosed in the sequel that is this very disclosure. Words bunch up together as judgment becomes concept, itself disappearing as mere moment and, necessarily, language with it.

This mediation of and by prescience of the phenomenal, of consciousness, contains as demonstrating (*aufzeigen*) the necessity, the proven truth of the logical standpoint. Mediation is proof, here of pure Knowing (of knowing). This is no mere finite "psychologism". Attempts to avoid this "moment" reduce philosophy and even mathematics to a mere ringing of the changes within formal systems. To represent this as Cognition is performative self-contradiction, known as such from the outset. The moment of soul or self-conscious Mind, rather, as not merely subjective (or objective) but Absolute Spirit, one with the willed self-

alienation as Nature which is Will itself (cognition), completes the self-absorption of Logic, as "all in all".

In this Science of appearing (emerging) Mind, prescience goes forward from the empirical, sensuous consciousness. This is the really immediate knowing, the content and import of which is there investigated. Any other such consciousness, be it a faith in divine truths, inner sense/experience, knowing through inward revelation and so on, is found on closer examination very improperly represented as immediate knowing.

In that treatise immediate consciousness is also in knowledge, in science, first and immediate, hence pre-condition. Yet in Logic the pre-condition is what has there shown itself as result, the Idea as pure knowing. Logic is pure knowledge, i.e. pure knowing in the whole compass of its development. Yet this Idea has there determined itself to that result of being certainty become truth. This certainty, that is, is no longer correlated with the object on the one hand, knowing it inwardly rather as itself. On the other hand it has (thereby) given up self-knowledge as opposed to the objective (itself opposed, as *Gegen-stand*, to it) as its mere negation and cancellation (*Vernichtung*). The Idea disposes of such a finite subjectivity in unity with its disposal of the object. Such an infinite subjectivity has no taint of the psychological or of any other empirical nature. As I it is the reverse of *der Einzige*, is "universal of universals", constituting all in perceiving all (cf. *Enc.* 160-161), *wahrmachend as wahrnehmend* (Suhrkamp, pp. 68-69). Ultimately, therefore, we beget one another. God, Hegel says, "must be apprehended as spirit in his community" (*Enc.* 554). Hegel opposes this to, or rather, as he does with (subjective) certainty, fuses it with the, it is implied, abstract "truth as such". There is an echo here of the Biblical idea of faith as the "victory overcoming the world". Hegel refers us to *Enc.* 63, the final note or *Zusatz* (not always marked as such in the translations) which, it is clear, must be taken along with the continuation in 64. Here he marks off a true from a false conception of faith. Hegel's reference to "the authority of the Church" here in reference to a true or genuine conception of faith is perhaps disconcerting at first. That he returns to it at the end of the *Encyclopaedia*, where giving his final elucidations of Spirit, shows that we cannot ignore this aspect of his conception, of truth become certainty in absolute subjectivity. It confirms a concrete Christian or other faith as distinct from Jacobi's eviscerated Enlightenment version of "faith", amounting to not much more than a naive realism, the "sapless abstract of immediate knowledge". Hegel's faith is attained at the end, with the cancellation of the Object. Nonetheless he does not present his system as "the Philosophy of Faith" (*Enc.* 63). It is, rather, the truth of absolute subjectivity, of Mind

or Spirit, presented in Christian faith (religion, the second form or representation of Absolute Spirit) as, in its "spiritual plenitude", "the indwelling of the Holy Spirit", as in identity with "the believer" and his or her "heart". Common to both, as uniting them, is the achieved insight that absolute knowledge is uniquely self-knowing, that life is redeemed or "saved" by yielding to that, to the Absolute Idea, the Concept, in *Aufhebung*. Because it is absolute this is not Gnosticism.

3. The beginning, then, of this knowledge of pure knowing (thought thinking itself) is immanent to its determination as pure or, which is the same, its determination to indetermination. This latter is self-constituting, self-determining and not abstraction. In Thomistic terms it is pure as not admitting addition and not merely pure as being thought without putatively possible additions.² So it is absolute rather than "common" or abstractly universal. So one cannot do other than take up this purely reflexive and self-authenticating knowing as immediate or to hand, yet mediated as precisely immediate by knowing's own "phenomenology" as pure beginning and hence, it will show itself, as end. Pure knowing, in this union with certainty, transcends all relation to another, all mediation. It is simple as without distinctions, and thus is knowing as not-knowing or as self-purified. It is at hand as simple immediacy purely. It is I.

"Immediacy", unlike the term "being", expresses reflection as relation to a difference from the mediated. Hence it is truly, i.e. more truly, expressed, this immediacy, as pure Being. That is, it *is* that; it expresses itself, is already, Hegel will say, self-revelation proceeding, in the dynamism, act, which is spirit (*Geist*). The Trinitarian or other active self-differentiations, "processions" (a term preferable to "processes" as less suggestive of or connoting finitude), cannot be thought as "added on". The term "immediacy", then, denotes Being and nothing else as pure knowing denotes only knowing over again, without completion by further determinations. Thus far it is "quite abstract", though, again, not as if "drawn from" (*abs-tractum*) any other.

Hegel thus avoids saying that this Beginning, the First, is "first to fall into thought" (Aquinas, *primum quod cadit in intellectum*), only true once or inasmuch as "thought" is known to be nothing other or, equivalently, the whole. This belongs to a later dialectical moment. Pure being is simple immediacy and, as more immediately apparent here, *vice versa*. Being is the actively beginning (das *Anfangende*, not just das *Anfang*), active and/or presently actual as mediated *via* self-transcendence. It becomes being as

² Aquinas, *Summa theol.* Ia 3, 4 ad 1.

going out of itself (act) in order to return in completion to itself, as itself self-diffusion or manifestation, as including the negative, non-being, its own other, since it is, as first, without limit or in-finite; the self-limiting is as such infinite. Or, one can say, pure knowing results from finite knowing, from consciousness or the moment of self-certainty absolutely considered. There is no hint here of deriving the necessary from the contingent, however. Yet even if we did not thus presuppose consciousness, taking the beginning without such mediation, it would then determine itself only as the beginning of Logic, of absolute Mind. It is Hegel's free wish to consider this too, as he must, which is posited as a precondition.

Here then absolute and abstract beginning mean the same, as presupposing nothing, no mediation, no ground. It is itself ground of all knowledge. So it must be not simply unmediated but immediacy itself. It cannot be referred in determination to any other. So also it can have no content in itself. That is, it does not, again, merely abstract from content. This would be differentiation and hence relation, of the mutually differing, mediation precisely. So again, the Beginning is pure Being. *Der Anfang ist also das reine Sein*. Or, initial freedom from content is itself content logically, and the content, metaphysically. It is *this* which is, to anticipate, alienated as nature, returning as spirit. Hegel here recovers the difference in unity of the Platonic form, so often logically or "one-sidedly", abstractly, miscast as mere ambiguity.

4. This non-mediation that is being is thus ourselves and even "our sweating selves" (G.M. Hopkins), the shadow we cannot hop over or consume, though we are forever putting our tails into our mouths or, like the dogs, vainly chasing them. So when Aquinas says being is what first comes to mind he refers not so much to being as to immediacy, Hegel has shown. It is therefore misunderstanding when some followers of Aquinas maintain that the being of Hegel here is not the *actus essendi* of Thomas. This is in fact pure Act as we have been discussing it, while the True is the unmediated or that than which nothing more "perfect" can be conceived, as then mediating it. It lies open, is not hidden (*a-letheia*). Heidegger will develop this. The mediated has always a presupposition, is less than prior. It is obvious that this doctrine of being implies a certain dethronement of being in favour of I or Self. Theologically, this is to set a space between fullness of being and notions of existence, between immortality and a self-consciousness conceived as distinct from self itself, anciently able to drink the waters of forgetfulness (Lethe) without forfeiting self.

Does this return us to Kant's critique of knowledge or its possibility, no more self-contradictory perhaps than Hegel's initial phenomenological

exercise? Is it a mere matter of attitude, of primal or absolute option for one or the other? Rather, pure immediacy, Hegel will show, is equally equivalent to Nothing (category-name, therefore). Just thereby, however, immediacy is not a limit or barrier, a thus far and no further, but infinitely free thought. The vision is one with Sartre's, as pure negativity is negative theology or destruction of the Idol. Hegel is no more and no less atheistic than the theo-logical enterprise itself. For "God is not being, God is freedom" (Berdyayev, in *The Destiny of Man*).

This principle of immediacy, disclosed as self, is the same, therefore, as that of Incarnation, of Reason ("Word"), always particular, as absolute and divine. "I and the Father are one." "He that has seen me has seen the Father" or, as it is put in the "synoptic" Gospels, more practically but equally literal, not ethical merely or "as if", what you do to any, to even the least, to children even, you do to me. The metaphysical significance here, as lying deeper, is prior to, more at the surface than, the merely ethical. Body, the visible, and Mind, we see, need not be distinguished. The visible or composed is already alienation, already therefore mind's *own* de-composition. In identifying with Christ, as necessarily particularised mediator, and with one another indifferently, as religion teaches, reason is incarnated in perpetual reduplication. McTaggart's atheistic presentation of this could thus far be its most perfect theological depiction to date. No birth no death, because a concretely universal nativity, that of "community", of one as many, many as one, in self's own self-transcendence. "If the seed dies it bears much fruit", not abiding alone. Concrete death is at once, or pre-eminently (by philosophy's idealism) thought's own death to one-sided abstraction, logic's death *toward* not merely metaphysics but toward the metaphysical, "entry into spirit"; "this particular existence has become universal self-consciousness" because "the universal, just because of this, is self-consciousness" (Baillie p. 781). This should be born in mind when reading McTaggart's objections, in his Commentary on the Logic (1910), to Hegel's treatment of Life towards Kind at *Enc.* 216-222. The universal in question is concrete (as in Plato) and not abstractly "logical": "what dies is... the abstraction of the Divine Being" in favour of "essential Being", which is not just "the simple abstract element of thought" but, again, "concrete reality" or "essential Being" proper, with which the self "first gets" "equal worth and value... as Spirit" The *event* of death is a "pictorial idea". Or, the loss of the Substance in initial "bitterness" is itself "the pure subjectivity of Substance" in knowledge, which is "spiritualization, whereby Substance *becomes* Subject" (my stress). It is death itself that "expires" (cp. the prophetic "Oh death I will be thy death" – among texts Hegel would know but refrains from quoting: we quote them now in

vindication of his, Hegel's, theological provenance). This is not a reduction or loss of substance, then, but "actual Spirit", only habitually imagined as bodiless or lacking substance. Spirit's "movement through its whole self constitutes its actual reality", since/or it is "the subject of the movement... through which the subject passes", It is *in this way* "certain of itself", recognising self also in its opposite or "forgiving evil". Every moment is now self, in the divine or absolute stance (which is thought).

Those words, about the dying seed, the *Gospel of John* attributes to Jesus as transcending or refusing to meet Greek philosophy ("Sir, there are some Greeks would talk with thee") on the eve of his death-negating act of death. It is accordingly false to view the dialectical progress from immediacy as a "series of linguistic recommendations" (Findlay). If a tie with language must be retained then they are much more speech-acts, acts indeed, that to which the Platonic Idea and intelligence could not attain, as we read at the end of the section on Objective Spirit.³ Logic, Hegel said, is creation or, in a word (we may now interpret), mediation, thinking, possibility and actuality in one. The creation is God's own Idea, which knowledge knows thus as its own, a *natura non materialiter spectata* since to see it materially would be to not-see it, would be not to see it. Absolute Idealism is thus Beginning and End, their reconciliation. This though calls in question that Beginning we have been concentrating upon, not as if to go over it again, since it is now accomplished (*fertig*, WLP.69, Suhrkamp), but to remove certain associated presentations and prejudices, as is the very work of Science.

We consider, then, Hegel writes (I paraphrase from Suhrkamp 5, p. 69), the insight that the Absolutely True must be (in itself) a Result precisely as and since First, as pre-supposed to result as such. This though is not necessarily known as such. Hence some have postulated that philosophy begins with only hypothetical or problematically postulated "truths", that in beginning to philosophise we enter on a process, a succession rather, of trying out ideas, as in the Socratic conception of dialectic, hoping that some or one of them turn out or happen to be correct.

This *sic et non* disputatiousness has and has had its uses. It illustrates the sense in which we progress and do not progress away from logic's beginning, its first position and/or positing. In fact philosophical progress is a regress as grounding the first insight we begin with (and not as replacing it as if it thus exposed it as a mere arbitrary assumption, rather as

³ "Plato could not work into his idea of it (viz. the state) the infinite form of subjectivity, which still escaped his intelligence. His state is therefore, on its own showing, wanting in subjective liberty (§503 note, §513, etc.)." (*Enc.* 552)

in geometry). This abides rather as the True, as the First Truth, being, here identified as being such, in absolute immediacy. Were it otherwise, we read in the *Encyclopaedia*, then philosophy would be the saddest and most pointless of enterprises, a perpetual self-refutation, instead of which it resembles rather "a Pantheon of godlike figures" (*Enc.* 86 *Zus.*).

5. One must admit, writes Hegel (Suhrkamp 5, p.70), as a basic consideration, that the movement forward is backward or "going to the Ground", to the original truth whence the initiatory act (*Anfang*) depends and is actually elicited. This beginning is self-actualising or, indeed, act as such, "pure act", that is to say. This is manifested (*ergeben wird*) in Logic itself, where origin originates. Thus consciousness, in its progress away from initial immediacy, is led back to absolute knowing as its own most inward truth. We might identify this as proto-instance of Hegel's "cunning of reason", the self-discovery waiting at the outermost bounds of the universe or, why not, of love and marriage, of philosophy as subsumed into the Notion it essentially represents (such representation being itself subsumed into the absolute knowing just mentioned).

To all this religion is essentially propaedeutic, which is not to say that such propaedeutic is essentially or must be religious. It has, however, been so in the universal history of consciousness, crowned and specified by philosophy as its ultimate or "defining" difference (*differentia*: cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* VII, on Reason or Spirit as the ultimately real, more real than "man" as "composite").

Philosophy's defining wisdom, accordingly, the end or conclusion which is this beginning, is recognition of the closed circle (Sartre's *huis clos*) as the at-homeness to which we awake from dream. Such recognition is the actual rising from sleep (again), the shouldering of the reality-constituting burden, or task of making a heaven out of hell itself, an end out of beginning, since such *telos* is the defining urge or drive (*Trieb*) of beginning (*Anfang*) itself. Thus Beginning closes the circle upon itself, sits everywhere as still centre. Rather than make a "linguistic recommendation" Hegel has made language talk, in the beginning's beginning itself. Hegel, GWF, is sublated and we as one with him and with one another. The State, Objective Spirit, has withered away and therefore will do so, absolutely, with or without what we have miscalled our selves. To illustrate such freedom, Zen-like perhaps, I quote the following schooldays verse:

One fine day in the middle of the night
Two dead men got up to fight.
Back to back they faced each other,
Drew their swords and shot each other.

This last, anyhow, the Ground, is thus also that from which the First exits or proceeds, appearing (*auftritt*) initially as immediate. It is rather, being, in ongoing manifestation, riches of the originating Nothing in Freedom or Glory, a concept we need not lose. "If I go down to hell thou art there also. Thy rod and thy staff shall comfort me." For even in Sheol, the Psalmist claims, the dead shall sing thy praises. Who or what is this "thy"? Why, being of course, the beginning, in philosophical *Gottesdienst*. This is action, Act, making the corpse of language emerge from the pyramidal tomb. No man has spoken like this man. And yet it is not I... or, I am not a man. Man is not. Being is nothing, in freedom.

Time, as we say, for breakfast. "Heaven is as real as tomorrow's breakfast" (McTaggart). No more, no less. You would not seek me unless you had found me. The mad are the sane, and we have always known it, in dancing whirl. In my end is my beginning. But where are we? We are where we were, ever. So and thus it is, says Hegel, that absolute Spirit, concrete last and highest truth of all Being, knows itself further still (*noch mehr*). It knows itself as externalising, manifesting or emptying (outing) itself at the End of the development, "letting itself go forth in freedom" (cf. *Enc.* 244). It goes forth in the appearance or figure (*Gestalt*) of an immediate Being, the very same, self-determined upon the creation of a world (*zur Schöpfung einer Welt*) containing all contained in (logical?) development prior to that Result.

This all is changed through this reversed positioning of its Beginning. That is, its Beginning is changed, into something dependent upon its result as upon its principle, viz. upon Being. What is essential for Science, for knowledge and certainty, is not so much that a pure immediacy be the beginning. It is rather that the whole of the same, of the Beginning, is, again, a closed circle, *Kreislauf in sich selbst*. Here the First is as the Last, the Last is as the First, in that most famous of Biblical identities, for that is what it is, identity and not mere paradox.

6. But (Suhrkamp, p.70: paraphrase) although this whole is essentially a closed circle it is, on the other hand or within that, equally necessary to treat that that in which the motion returns upon its Ground as Result. Seen in this way the First is as well the Ground, the Last as well as Derivative, inasmuch as there is an exit from the First coming through correct drawing of conclusions upon the Last as upon the Ground (of the First), namely absolute Spirit as just mentioned. This going forth from what otherwise, or abstractly, stands as the Beginning is to be seen only or exclusively as a further determining of just the or this beginning, the very same

(*desselben*). Thus that which begins (*das Anfangende*) remains as and at the base of all that results and does not vanish or recede therefrom.

The going forth (*Fortgehen*), that is, does not consist in derivation of an exclusively other or a transition to a genuine other (*wahrhaft Anderes*), abstractly conceived as (linear) process. In so far as there is such transition it just as much transcends, supersedes or puts itself by again (*hebt sich auf*). Thus is the beginning of philosophy, present in all developments following as self-maintaining foundation, that which immanently abides in all its own (this is what they are) further determinations.

Here let us recall his saying that the Creation of a World is Absolute Spirit's co-constitutive act, along with and in this Beginning as self-determination, "diffusion" or that manifestation which Spirit is. Such an act, without reserve, is itself constitutive of the Good, *bonum*, Plato had taught). Hence this act of creating contains all of Spirit, i.e. all simply, developed inwardly prior to this going forth (*exitus*), so that there must be essential return (*reditus*) of absolute Spirit. This is Hegel's more profound version of the "best of all possible worlds", focussing upon necessity, recurring thread of his Philosophy of Nature and deeply in harmony with some of the most recent conceptions of physics. Such a beginning, as presented, is in fact a deconstruction of the very idea of a beginning as something not found throughout the going forward or as itself in the other. "This also is thou, neither is this thou." Hegel is following as supplying the rational ground implicit to the common "mystical" trajectory. Mystical or logical, it is the same, at least as a deconstruction, again, of appearances. Nor is the mystical, taken concretely, a mere "moment" of this, such as the affective, the euphoric, etc. etc. (cf. *Enc.* 159).

In this going forth the Beginning loses that one-sided determination, something immediate and abstract, proper to just beginning taken precisely (*cum praecisione*⁴). It becomes, is found to be, rather, something mediated. The line of scientific progress and/or development (*Fortbewegung*) is thus transformed into a circle. Hegel here is not merely repeating but revolving his discovery.

Simultaneously we see that what stood as (*macht*) beginning, inasmuch as yet undeveloped and without content, is not truly cognised (*erkannt*) until Science (philosophy) fully develops itself to its complete and entire content, this being truly grounded and/or justified knowledge (*begründete Erkenntnis*). This result's resulting as absolute foundation (*Grund*) is precisely why the development of this perception of things (*Erkennen*) is not something provisory or hypothetical, not problematic. It has, namely,

⁴ Cf. Aquinas, *De ente et essentia*.

itself to be determined, as such knowing, through the nature of the case, of the content. There is no development from obscure, as it were uncertain beginnings, as this *a priori* exploration of the very concept of the *a priori* and its *ipso facto* prior or foundational necessity makes plain. Similarly, in biological evolutionary theory, what exists at any given moment, however early, as "surviving", is precisely "the fittest" or most perfect then and there. There is here coincidence of the *a priori* and necessary with the *a posteriori* and contingent. Rather, what seemed contingent is found, on viewing the totality, i.e. non-abstractly, to be necessary and *the* necessary. Contingence is in fact this *its* seeming, a truth first applicable to the thinking subject, to "this man".

This beginning of beginnings, then, is not something arbitrary or for the moment assumed, like the Big Bang. It is not, that is, an arbitrary representation hypothesised (*vorausgesetzt*) for want of anything better, from which one might possibly hope to go on to show that one did right to make (*machen*) it serve as the beginning. One proceeds thus in geometry, with constructions needed for proof of a theorem, since from them alone one comes first to this and so has done well to draw just this line and then to begin, in the "proof", with, he says, "comparing" just this line or angle. Just this line-drawing or development therefore (*Vergleichen*) is on its own merits (*für sich*) not to be understood. The development into and of the Creation, Hegel is saying, is not here truly represented, for it is indeed mere *Vorstellung*, as a progress or process through means to end, retrospectively justifying the former. The whole Notion, rather, is identical with each and any part or moment in mutual justification and/or origination (*Anfang*). The Notion activates each constituent as constituting itself, the Notion.

Effectively Hegel is denying the beginning of the world, of Nature, as anything other than phenomenal, as indeed he would have to do. Of course a phenomenon appears phenomenally only, having literally and entirely no truth, nothing to penetrate, its outside is already inside and *vice versa*. We will not discover the eternity of the world by empirical analysis, while the "new" and eternal "age" (*aevum*) lies ever on the surface of the old. The Notion is the first and last percept.

Rather than thinking of the perpetual and hence nugatory beginning of the world, however, we should rather stay focussed upon the beginning of thinking, of absolute thought. This, Hegel claims, has just Being as its absolute beginning and absolute *simpliciter* in one, with Being as the Notion and therefore beginning and end, alpha and omega. This is what is first under discussion here. On this analysis theology interprets the standard "In the beginning God created heaven and earth" as that God

creates heaven and earth in the beginning which is himself. He, the self-conceiving Concept, thinks as other what is himself, of course completely. Hence even those evanescent perfections we see must signify what is necessary to this perfection, creation itself not a mere replica but an image or moment, a "formal sign", through which only, again, God or Spirit rejoins self in absolute (self-)knowledge. When it is said that God "only" knows things in his idea of them this has to mean that things *are not* other than this idea, albeit this idea "in otherness".

So we said that the Ground and/or reason why in pure knowledge one begins from pure being is immediately indicated in knowledge itself. This pure being is the unity into which pure knowledge returns or is resolved. Or if being itself should be held distinct as Form from this unity (as its form) then it is *ipso facto* the Content of the same. This attempt fails, that is to say. Thus viewed one sees that pure being, the absolute-immediate, i.e. the immediate which is the absolute and not merely the immediately absolute, is just thereby the absolutely mediated and/or the absolute as mediated. The form is absolute mediation of the content. This is what those meant who said that God is "pure form". The characteristic attaches also to the transcendental predicates, besides Being, such as Good, One, True. Thus the Good is just what is taken or desired as good, *viz.* being, the True what is known as true, *viz.* being. The One is perfect simplicity, including all, *viz.* being. These are all *entia rationis*, beings "of reason" only, since they are themselves being (*ens*) itself viewed from one or other aspect.⁵ In just the same way dreams or the future are such sham beings, as Hegel says of evil. Aquinas includes also though negativities as privations, such as blindness. These are not something but the lack of something. One could show, I consider, that there is only an apparent opposition to Hegel's treatment of negativity here. Thus although Hegel takes evil as unreal or sham being he gives it an essential place, along with the false, likewise false precisely in being, in the working out of the good and the true.

The case is similar with happiness, classically treated as possession of Good as all good, in the end self-possession or being happy. Similarly, at the highest level, reality is not distinguished from the thinking of it, a position common to Aristotle and Hegel. We can thus speak of "the ontology of logical forms", in further example.⁶

Being, that is, the unmediated, is mediated by the knowledge which it is. Being is self-knowing, Hegel indicates here, as the Logic will disclose in detail. It is, however (Suhkamp 5, p.72), in the first place essential that

⁵ Cf. Aquinas, *QD de potentia*, VII.

⁶ Henry B. Veatch, "Concerning the Ontological Status of Logical Forms", *Review of Metaphysics*, December 1948.

Being be one-sidedly taken as being the Pure-Immediate, just because it is here (*hier als der Anfang ist*) as the Beginning. We are asking, at the beginning, why there should be a beginning, desiring that the treatise here should fuse with the order of things, not be the particular and phenomenal written German work or text in essence. At the same time Hegel's aim may well be thought to include subversion of the usual way of taking, *Vorstellungsweise*, the creation dogma, as it were "in time".

For once this pure indeterminacy, pure being, is determined as it itself is virtually the perfection and essence of all determinations and/or perfections) then it would be taken as already having been taken further or mediated. Yet in so far as it is thus mediated it ceases to be the Beginning unless it return to itself, for "there is none good but God" or, say rather, "only being is" (Parmenides, Hegel⁷).

Anything determined, that is, adds another to its First, yet Being is that to which no addition can be made, since addition, or anything, though "else", is yet being over again. Thus it lies in the nature of the Beginning itself that it is Being and otherwise nothing and, further, that being is only added to in returning to that being, in logic as in the very truth itself, the Notion or Absolute Idea which *is* the Absolute. No further or other preparation is needed to enter or find oneself within the closed circle without exit (*huis clos*) which is philosophy. Nor do we need further (*anderweitige*) reflections and points for locking on to this.

From this we can see that there is no basis for the charge that the Thomists often have brought against Hegel that he treats being only as the common predicate of all "things", as *esse commune*⁸ or even as no real being at all, and not as "perfection of perfections".⁹ The distinction Aquinas himself makes here lies in an identity in difference (to speak with Hegel) between that to which addition is not made and that to which addition is made, since such addition is being over again. Where it belongs to the concept of being that addition not be made it is divine being (the Beginning in Hegel's text). Where it belongs to its concept that addition is made (so as to be something) then it is (or becomes) common being merely, the highest thus meeting the lowest at all points of the circle (of being).¹⁰

⁷ Cf. *Enc.* 86 *Zus.* for Hegel's assessment of Parmenides as proper founder of philosophy. Here "for the first time we find pure thought seized and made an object to itself."

⁸ Cf. Aquinas, *Summa theol.* Ia 3, art. 3.

⁹ *Ibid.* 3, art. 4.

¹⁰ Cf. *ibid.* 3, 3 ad 1.

For Hegel God is the Beginning in himself as in all and each. There is thus, implicitly, no substance. This category is transcended. Yet as "absolute subject"¹¹ the Beginning, being, *esse divinum*, is all. Yet it is not "common being" since this, as abstracting from the Beginning, is precisely nothing at all, false, finite, phenomenal. The Beginning, thus, is the Beginning of Philosophy. Nor does this give any closer determination or more positive content to the Beginning. No created thing belongs to the Beginning of that thing in which the former "participates".¹² This, all the same, is part of the very abstractness of the Beginning (as such), which Hegel is subverting. The Beginning rather enters into the very (separate) being of all things, thus (again) subverting this being. Thus the false is said to belong, as moment, to the true. So Philosophy here in the Beginning as such, prior to determination or and of *die Sache selbst*, the thing itself, is "an empty word", an assumed and unjustified *Vorstellung*, Hegel says. Here pure knowing is only negatively determined as abstract Beginning. Inasmuch as pure Being is taken to be the Content of pure knowing, so here it has retreated from its own content (is known purely in the sense of *cum praecisione*, or without addition), to leave it alone for itself without determining it further.

7. What then is this pure being of Hegel's, the *Anfang*? It seems neither to be the "act of acts" nor "the truth of a proposition" since it is in fact the reconciliation of both, the text shows, amplifying Aquinas's commentary on Aristotle's *On Interpretation* where he, Aquinas, says:

For [is] means that which is understood after the manner of absolute actuality. For is, when it is expressed without qualification, means to be in act, and therefore it has its meaning after the manner of a verb. But the actuality, which is the principal meaning of the verb is, is indifferently the actuality of every form, either substantial or accidental act. Hence it is that when we wish to signify that any form or act actually inheres in any subject, we signify it by this verb is, either simply or according to some qualification - simply, in the present tense; according to some qualification, in the other tenses.¹³

The Analysts, on the other hand, leave "is" in pure equivocation, e.g. sometimes it has "existential import", sometimes not. Pure knowledge

¹¹ But see below for Hegel's reservations about thus identifying the beginning (*Anfang*) at this initial stage.

¹² Cp. Aquinas, *ibid.* 44, 1.

¹³ Aquinas, *In I Periherm.*, lect. 5, no. 22, cf. our *Philosophy or Dialectic*, P. Lang, Frankfurt, 1994, p.55.

evinces (*gibt*) only this negative determination, that it be the *abstract* Beginning. In so far as pure Being is taken as Content of pure Knowing the latter has withdrawn from its own Content, to leave it alone for itself without determining it further (for knowing is only to be explained in terms of such being).

Or, if we take pure Being as the unity, with knowing at its highest pitch of union coinciding with its object, then in this unity knowing vanishes as not differing from it or, thus, further determining it. Nor is any other Content at hand to make the Beginning more determinate. As absolute it is, so to say, *the pre-determinate determining by its presence each and every determination*. Hegel is here reproducing to the letter the ancient (Greek) insight that knowing or knower become the known, since otherwise it is not known, just as, if there were to be some organ mediating knowledge this would then, as Aristotle argues in *On the Soul*, which Hegel claims (in *Enc. III*, "Philosophy of Spirit") is still the only worthwhile book on the soul, "appear beside" (*paremphaînomenon*), disabling any possible knowing.

But also the previous determination of Being as Beginning could be discarded, leaving only the demand that a pure beginning be made. In that case there would be nothing at hand as the Beginning itself. It would remain to be seen (in the development) what it is, as being what is not (the identity of Being and Nothing is the same thought as this). Such a posture, says Hegel, would be equivalent to a concession to those, like many of the Cartesians, in part not reconciled to beginning with being, from whatever consideration, still less to Being's successful transition to Nothing. Here they recognise only that one begins in a science with a hypothetical presupposition (*Vorstellung*) to be hereupon analysed. The result of analysis will yield the first definite scientific concept, they imagine. In observing this procedure, however, we would have no special object. For the beginning thus viewed, of the thinking concerned, would be wholly abstract, general, a form lacking all content. We would have nothing but the notion or representation (*Vorstellung*) of a "pure" (Hegel's stress) Beginning as such. So we have but to look and see what we have in just this representation.

In the *Encyclopaedia* presentation of logic Hegel will say that beginning "is itself a case of Becoming" (88), but employed as term "with an eye to further advance". If we began with "Beginning as abstractly thought... perhaps people would more readily admit, as a result of this analysis, that Being and Nothing present themselves as undivided in unity," while if we return to the greater *Science of Logic* we read that the Beginning is still Nothing and it should become Something (*etwas*). The

beginning is not pure Nothing, but a Nothing from which something (*etwas*) should proceed. Thus being is already here contained in the beginning, after all. The beginning "contains" both, Being and Nothing, is the unity of Being and Nothing. This unity, says Hegel (EL88) is "inherent unrest". There, in fact, he outlines this in what is difficult not to see as a reflection of the Trinitarian processions he holds in the back of his mind and which correspond more truly to his category of Becoming than does their reflection in physical and temporal process. This latter identification, given that Becoming, "the first concrete thought", is, like any category, a "predicate of the Absolute" (EL86: Being and the rest are "metaphysical definitions of God"), he equates with identifying Being "with what persists amid all change, with matter", which he rejects, going on to equate it with Pantheism (EL88, no.5, actually an addition from 1830) as specifically controverting his maxim that Being and Nought or Nothing are passages ("eternal unrest") into one another, i.e. not mere "abstract identity". Pantheism teaches the "eternity" of matter while Hegel teaches not matter's beginning but its nullity.

Alternatively, his main logical work goes on, it is Non-Being that is Being simultaneously and Being that is simultaneously Non-Being. This first move of the Logic here anticipated is precisely due to having first discarded Being from the Beginning without reducing it to pure Nothing (since it is to become Something). Here, in making the Beginning the unity of Being and Nothing Hegel might seem to equate it with Becoming, as first positing dialectic within the dialectic, "with an eye to further advance". Thus he says (EL88) that "Beginning is itself a case of Becoming", a "tolerably plain example", i.e. besides Becoming's being "the unity of Being and Nothing". Yet Becoming is itself an "example" of the Notion, as are all these here suggested categories, though we may be "not aware" that they actively of themselves "exemplify" the Notion. "The readiest example of it is Becoming."

The Beginning, as being itself both without beginning and omnipresent (one goes forward in order to go back to the Ground, we read earlier), shows, if identical with Becoming, how distinct, as really and not abstractly separate from it, Becoming in its notion is from any consideration of phenomenal Time.

Now what causes or grounds the admission of Nothing, of Non-Being, into the Beginning, into the Absolute, unless the admission of Being as either itself the Immediate, or as in immediate relation with Mind, i.e. not itself absolute? Mind itself posits that Being which is "henceforth" its own! Therefore such knowing knows the alternative as positing alternation, the "eternal unrest", alterity, as such. Freedom, that is, is

constituted in the Trinitarian posture, as we can say without being dogmatic.¹⁴ "I do nothing of myself" (my stress). Yet "I and my Father are one." The parallel cannot be missed. This claim does not so much take from the Father as add the latter's self-"diremption" as chief or self-diffusive quality, the quality of Being itself, *viz.* to make itself Nothing as Nothing, freedom, has made itself Being. We have here, that is, in conceiving the infinite or absolute in its idea (it is an idea, Idea as such), to transcend, subvert or sublate our immediate and hence finite (and indeed phenomenal, as conceived by us) concept of immediate or unthematized Being. Hence, as to phenomenal concepts even, the very stuff of the dialectic in its course of self-sublation, it was said "My thoughts are not your thoughts", And yet, if thinking is but followed through to the end, to its Result, then they are. But if they are our thoughts, then we will have overcome that *Vorstellung* of a dark, eternal power obscuring the absolute Concept of God, i.e. the absolute Concept simply, as "light... in whom is no darkness at all." We stand, that is, in our own light and have to get out of the way. If Being is Nothing then Nothing is not "a hole" in Being, through which thinking becomes as it were after all possible, despite Being's "impenetrability" (Sartre). We have, rather, a radical rethinking of Being as, precisely, not Nothing but one with nothing. So we have not the void, the "useless passion", but "eternal unrest", exemplified in Becoming as a category

Hegel chooses thus to exemplify, he here admits, no doubt with Aristotle's analysis of change, as opening the *Physics*, in mind, since the parallel, of becoming with change or *motus*, could hardly be more exact. Hence in EL Hegel refers us to Heraclitus as a definite advance upon the Eleatics (88 *Zus.*). "Being no more is than not-Being: a statement expressing the negativity of abstract Being, and its identity with not-Being, as made explicit in Becoming: both abstractions being alike untenable", a criticism as to abstractness. Hegel, however, if not Heraclitus, will apply the criticism equally to Becoming and all finite categories. Regarding the finite, Hegel is content to cite Plato, in a passage also recalling (or anticipating) Hegel's specifically Trinitarian thought, that

¹⁴ Hegel in fact says somewhere, or rather everywhere, that anyone treating the question concerning some "religious" tenet as to whether or not it really is so as a substantive religious enquiry has simply failed to grasp the nature of religious thought and experience. *A fortiori*, he has failed to grasp the nature, or Content rather, of Absolute Spirit (i.e. the Content as such), of which religion is a finitely presented or defective form. This can be applied to debates on "the existence of God", in what appears as relativisation of Aquinas's procedure.

God made the world out of the nature of the 'one' and the 'other' (*tou heterou*): having brought these together, he formed from them a third, which is of the nature of the 'one' and the 'other'. In these words we have in general terms a statement of the nature of the finite, which as something, does not meet the nature of the other as if it had no affinity to it, but, being implicitly the other of itself, thus undergoes alteration... mutability lies in the notion of existence, and change is only the manifestation of what it implicitly is. The living die, simply because as living they bear in themselves the germ of death. (*Enc.* 92)

He had previously stated:

Even Becoming... is an extremely poor term: it needs to grow in depth and weight of meaning. Such... we find e.g. in Life. Life is a Becoming... A still higher form is found in Mind. Here too is Becoming... The elements, whose unity constitutes mind, are... the system of the logical Idea and of Nature. (*Enc.* 88, *Zus.*).

As regards the Beginning, further, Hegel now continues (Suhrkamp 5, p.73), it is itself the very distinction of Being and Nothing, as in itself pointing to something else (which it begins or inaugurates). Thus it is itself a nothing, a non-Being (and hence a being, since it *is* a non-Being!¹⁵) related to Being as to an other. What begins is not yet. It approaches Being rather (there is no reference to temporality intended here). Thus the Beginning contains Being as distancing itself, though not yet as a something, *etwas*, even if *als ein Solches*, from Non-Being. Or it, Being, sublates (*aufhebt*) Non-Being, making it to be Nothing, to be as opposed to it, as an opposite (pole) to itself.

But further, what thus begins is already (in order to begin). Yet it is just as much, equally, not (yet: *noch*). The opposites, Being and Non-Being, are *thus*, in the Beginning, in immediate union. Or the Beginning *just is* their inseparable (indistinguishable) unity. *This concept results from analysis of the Beginning specifically.* Or also, as reflected (if we reflect), it is the unity of difference and indifference, of being distinct and being the same, of, ultimately, Identity and Non-Identity. I am you, or anyone ("Everyman") in being myself. That's what it means to be myself, or I. So

¹⁵ This paradox is not to be escaped from by mere reference to an equivocation upon "is" as to usages having or not having "existential import". This was never part of logic and "is" is always "is", as dragons are or can be green in the same sense as anything else, existing or not. See, for example, the work of Fred Summers or the article on the subject by Graham Priest on Internet, or other criticism of Russellian logic on this point, such as Meinong's work or "sistology" as developed by Richard Sylvan and others.

this concept will be seen as first and purest, i.e. the most abstract (purified) definition of the Absolute, although Hegel is about to advance some objections against a too hasty identification here. It is, that is the definition (as I), how this, the Absolute, would be if and when formally conceived and defined as a name or term. Yet, I would add here, in speaking of a beginning at all, in taking it up indeed, we are attempting to relate the Absolute to that from which it is pure separation as the only real, to otherness within its inmost essence. This is a straight contradiction, on the face of it, if anything is, but such as our culture, which includes philosophy and which, I aim to show, *is* philosophy, *sophia*, has embraced for millennia now: as in "and yet they, the three, are not three but one", etc. So Hegel was not the first here. Was anyone?

From the individual and ever-identical essence (*ousia*) and the divisible which is corporeal, he compounded a third intermediate species of essence... And taking these, being three, he compounded them all into one form (idea), adjusting perforce the unmixable nature of the other and the same, and mingling them all with the essence, and making of three one again, he again distributed this total into as many portions as were fitting, but each of them mingled out of the same and the other and the essence. (Plato, *Timaeus*, c.35)

In the sense in which the abstract concept is then the first definition or, surely, determination of this Absolute so all further determinations and/or developments of it are only (*nur*) more definite and richer definitions. So those not satisfied, he says, with our positing Being as beginning, because it "becomes" Nothing (*in Nichts übergeht*), yielding a unity of Being and Nothing, can consider whether they are more satisfied with this beginning which begins with the "notion" (*Vorstellung*) of just the beginning and with its analysis. This is surely correct and leads *ipso facto* to the unity of Being and Nothing rather than simply letting Being be made the Beginning. The difference meant here is that in the first case one begins with the *Vorstellung* of beginning as eliciting Being (and Nothing) while in the second case one simply begins with Being as what comes first to mind as immediate, unqualified conception.

But there is yet a further consideration concerning this our procedure. Looking at the classic observation that "being is the first to fall into the mind" we find that Hegel attends not only to Mind as receiving being (*ens*) but also, firstly, he attends to being as a or, rather, the beginning. He thus sees that it is first before it is being and so is not itself properly or self-referentially first, since it is then not (yet) a being or object of possible reference (it must be at least a "being of reason" to be such an "object").

He relates this "inherent unrest" specifically to the contradiction implicit in the making of judgements, to language as our phenomenal means for apprehending thought in its truth:

The fact is, no speculative principle can be correctly expressed by any such propositional form, for the unity has to be conceived in the diversity, which is all the while present and explicit. "To become" is the true expression for the resultant of "To be" and "Not to be"; it is the unity of the two; but not only is it the unity, it is also inherent unrest, - the unity, which is no mere reference-to-self and therefore without movement, but which, through the diversity of Being and Nothing that is in it, is at war with itself. (*Enc.* 88).

This war, it is clear, results from these phenomenal imperfections of language as part-product of that mere moment (of the Absolute) which is Nature. It would be sheer perversity, therefore, to posit this war, Empedocles-like, on to the Absolute itself, which is rather the harmony of Mind itself, as cited above from the corresponding *Zusatz*, "The elements, whose unity constitutes Mind...". "Philosophy is the battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by language" (Wittgenstein). Hence Hegel will teach that the Good is eternally accomplished (212, *Zus.*). The Being and Nothing that are at war perpetually are our categories, our inchoate conceptions. Speech, therefore, must not merely have an end but is in essence, like the Beginning itself, phenomenal. The negative theology here is thus indeed and must be totally negative if indeed it is to be anything, i.e. to be the Nothing it claims to be.

We may pause here, recalling first Wittgenstein:

6.54. My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognises them as nonsensical, when he has used them - as steps - to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it).

He must transcend these propositions, and then he will see the world aright.

7. What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence. (*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 1921).

This is pure Hegel, if with a difference, that of the "ungratefulness of spirit" to its "ladders". There is the same mistrust of language, of judgements or "propositions", but not of "the mystical", as Wittgenstein is sometimes misinterpreted. John of the Cross, as this sixteenth century Spaniard and *doctor ecclesiae* is called, anticipates such negative theology, in the course of a practical recommendation of silence, saying "God has spoken only one Word, and that is his Son". We are more than

our words inasmuch as we are word. If true that must nowhere be more held in mind than when philosophising, i.e. thinking, which thus must sublate itself, it too, in the Concept, beyond or rather anterior, logically, to all judgements. The Concept, as Word, uniquely and not as one (word or concept indifferently: cf. the old equivalence of *conceptum* with *verbum interius*) among many and so abstract, must, it will be found, be personal or at any rate not less than personal. This is not, note, an *apologia* for anything, whether the cap fits or not. No cap will fit perfectly, just because it is a cap and not the head itself.

8: There is now a further consideration to make over these procedures, Hegel announces. The analysis mentioned above assumes this representation of the beginning as, precisely, an assumption. This is how the beginning as generally understood is generally represented, according to the procedure in the particular sciences, as also and supremely in mathematics. These presuppose their object, uncritically. They hence assume hypothetically, as included in that presupposition, that every man has the same notion (*Vorstellung*) of a beginning and thus finds therein the same determinations as each or any of them, through analysis, comparison and the like (*Räsonnement*, Suhrkamp p.74), finds or posits concerning this object. They take or impose such determinations from here or there or, so to say, anywhere, as if out of the air.

Regarding the absolute Beginning, however, whatever constitutes it must *ipso facto* be something otherwise (*sonst*) known (than as a beginning), even though there can be nothing from which to reason to it, since it is beginning. If it is something concrete, with a manifold of determinations, then this relational network (*Beziehung*) that it is in itself is presupposed to it, the beginning, as something known other than it or presupposed (to what is posited as beginning). So it is put forward (*angegeben*) as something which is an Immediate, which is just what it is not. For it is, rather, only relation as if of various things distinguished from it, which it thus mediates. This mediation is within, is intrinsic to it, in such case. Such a Beginning, however, could only thus include everything if everything were in fact nothing or if the beginning, just by being such, thereby made everything to be nothing. This would be one somewhat drastic solution to the paradoxes we encounter with this concept, that it is in fact the Concept, and is in the End shown to be so. That is, not just Being is shown to be the Concept (Notion) but the very Beginning of thinking, and not only of this piece of nineteenth century dialectic, is in the end thinking itself (*ipse*) as thinking itself (*se*). *Das Denken selbst denkt sich* (not a citation).

Here though we rather jump ahead. Hegel remarks here that the contingency and arbitrariness of "the analysis" (made either here or previously) now comes into the open (*tritt am Konkreten*). The determinations alleged are seen to depend upon what each has found in advance (*vorfindet*) in and/or through his immediate and chance manner of representing things to himself or herself. Hegel is in a sense preparing a criticism of his own position, it might almost seem here. The relation contained in something con-crete, as noted above, in a synthetic unity, is necessary only inasmuch as it is not found there as it were previously or of its own accord (*vorgefunden*), i.e. as disclosed to analysis in the above-named pejorative sense (*Räsonnement*). It must rather be produced (*hervorgebracht*), or produce itself, in its own moving of its, the relational concrete's, intrinsic moments (*die eigen Bewegung der Momente*). Such a movement is the opposite of the analytical procedure. For it is a movement of the thing itself considered (*der Sache*) within itself or, equivalently, exterior (to our analytical consideration). That is, the beginning itself begins and must begin, as being beginning. It is movement as of an action (*Tuns*) falling into the mind of the subject contemplating it (*in das Subjekt fallenden Tuns*), or as itself categorised as within such a Subject, though this would take us on to Hegel's next consideration, concerning the *Ich*. *Im Anfang war der Tat*, Hegel would have read in Goethe, the deed, the doing, one with that uttering of the word or with that manifestation Hegel equates with the Notion as being the manifestation of itself. No word, no Notion. No world, no God, but just as the Concept's manifestation, in a "moment", the world itself is denied, so not pantheism, Hegel insists, as in the final paragraphs of the *Encyclopaedia* (or at *Enc.50* and elsewhere in that work).

I do not really digress. Everything has to be held in mind at once, here on the threshold of silence where words more than ever abound. Whatever, anyhow, serves for making a beginning cannot be something con-crete as having relations within itself. For, again, such a set of relation pre-poses mediation and transition from a first to an other within the beginning, in presumably infinite regress, so that there is then no beginning at all, but rather we "begin" indeed, or not-begin, with a result. One recalls the Leibnizian demand that if there are composites there must be simples, though no one ever finds one, or Wittgenstein's a-tomic propositions. Can Hegel move beyond such dilemmas? The Beginning should (*soll*) not itself be a first and an other or second within the beginning. Again one recalls Aristotle concluding metaphysically, i.e. after (*meta*) his philosophy of nature, soul and the like, that substance should not be soul and body, form and matter. Such composites have already gone forward (*Fortgegangen*)

from their principle and/or essence. Aquinas had struggled with the same problem in *De ente et essentia*, distinguishing having flesh, that the form shall be enfleshed, from just this flesh, this matter of the individual. But this, says Hegel, shall not, ultimately cannot be. A beginning must be "pure" before it gets a relation. There must first be a subject relating prior to its being subject to that *other*. That is, there cannot be an "incomplete substance" such as Aquinas postulated. Later on Hegel seems to deny this position as the Logic passes through absolute relatedness without abstract *relata* to the Concept itself. He will have to say, it seems, that there is no beginning, that thinking is a closed circle, as declared earlier here, and not a line, that the beginning is in fact being, is in fact the Concept. God created heaven and earth in the beginning, i.e. in himself.

It follows, he now says, that the beginning, or what constitutes (*macht*) it, is unanalysable, is a non-analysability, just in its immediacy and "empty" simplicity. It is therefore to be taken as Being, as the totally empty (that contains all, as Actuality itself is the fullness of that absolute Potentiality which is utter emptiness, to anticipate, as we must if we want to "get it").

Someone might impatiently object to this view of the abstract beginning, saying that one should not begin with the beginning, but straightaway (immediately?) with reality (*mit der Sache*). This *Sache*, this reality, however, is nothing other than that empty Being we have identified as (and at) the beginning. We have no right, no access, to any prior conception of the reality (*Sache*). This can only disclose itself in the unfolding development of the knowing we are initiating, i.e. beginning(!). Whatever "form" be taken to make a different beginning, other than empty being, suffers from the defect outlined, is mediated, namely. Those dissatisfied with this beginning must assume the task of beginning otherwise, while avoiding this defect.

9: Hegel cannot leave completely (*ganz*) unmentioned, therefore, a more "original" (*origineller*) beginning "otherwise" in philosophy, become famous in more recent times. This is the beginning with I. He is clearly thinking of Descartes and not only of Fichte. This procedure¹⁶ arose partly (*teils*) out of the reflection that from the first truth everything following must be derived, partly from the requirement that the first truth be

¹⁶ Hegel shows himself happy to use the term "method" virtually introduced by Descartes, who wrote a treatise on it, though not without deepening its significance to the point of corresponding to the truth itself. The Beginning is itself a or the method, as follows from the assertion (not an "assumption") of the rationality of the real or actual.

something known and familiar (*Bekanntes*) and, yet more, an immediate certainty. These two "parts" are in fact each the same requirement (*Bedürfnis*) and indeed principle or itself beginning as truth, that the actual is the rational and *vice versa*. Nothing else can be thought through. To understand this better, recall that it is the same truth that is affirmed in the doctrinal tradition of the Church or, as Hegel prefers to say, Christianity. The ultimate truth, that is to say, what we call God (the theo-logical term for such an ultimate), can be known with certainty by the Reason, it is declared. That is, again, there is no such thing as "human" reason merely and this alone is why it can be true that "the proper study of mankind is man". Man, namely, transcends himself, as transfigurable in thinking, in Spirit, to be "raised" (as) a "spiritual body", in the iconic language of religion (here attributable to Paul of Tarsus). All language is iconic, and hence a potential "bewitchment" of intelligence (Wittgenstein). Hence also Hegel sets his face against the common "religious" assumption that this refers to a knowledge that God exists quite divorced from any knowledge of God's nature or essence. This would be to know the existence of God in abstraction from knowing God. As abstraction, however, this must become mere *Vorstellung*. Therefore the rationality of reality is quite compatible with an eventual disclosure that God is, identically, the rational community of persons in a manner that would normally be called atheism. Compare "You are Christ's and Christ is God's", while the same tradition, and same writer probably at least says, "You are Christ", to whom another apostle shall have said, here of and to precisely an *appearance* even, "My Lord and my God". Representations, we recall, are not, as moments of the true, utterly false, a teaching in harmony with the Thomist *malum est semper in subjecto (bono)*. Israelite religion, in itself and later in its Christian form, was condemned as atheism by those outside the movement¹⁷. Movement it indeed was and is. This means though that as emerging with Christianity (or Judaism) atheism, as transcending (a previous) theism, or as continually transcending it (in active condemnation of idolatry), is no longer to be religiously condemned. What the tradition has also taught, however, is that images (*Vorstellungen*) are to be affirmed, as against the iconoclast heresy, because we cannot do without them, if for no other reason. They are indeed the essence of language itself, of our communication, as we ourselves are each images (icons) of Reason, of

¹⁷ "Tears run out from mine eyes while they say daily to me, Where is thy God?" From *The Book of Psalms*, a psalm by an Israelite in captivity. He adds, however, "As for our God, he is in heaven". Hegel calls "heaven" a representation of self-consciousness as a place. McTaggart, who uses the term without apology, agrees. Neither, that is, say tha heaven, Hegel's "blessedness", is not.

God, of rationality, of the Beginning as of Method. To see them, all finite notions or things named, i.e. names themselves, as images, however, is to speak from within philosophy as absolute or last standpoint and Idea.

I return to Hegel's text. This beginning, with I, is in general not such a chance representation (*Vorstellung... zufällig*) as can be found constituted (*beschaffen*) in one subject so, in another otherwise. That is, it cannot, may not, be this. For I, this immediate self-consciousness, first itself, partly, appears as, precisely, immediate or as *the* immediate, again (as does Being). Partly, too, it appears as known thus immediately (*bekanntes*) in a much higher (*höheren*) sense than that of just some representation we have. Something otherwise thus familiar does indeed belong to the I, Hegel says, but as all the same (*noch*) distinct from it, as, namely, Content, necessarily, though itself, so to say, the content of any chance content or other. For, as against this, I is the simple certainty of itself, *seiner selbst*, of its own self. Yet this "of itself" and not "of oneself" seems the more immediate meaning of the latter expression. Nor does Hegel put the word "I" in citation marks, as if speaking of the word for I merely, in or with "material supposition" as they used to say. It therefore seems to me inescapable that he might rather have said, throughout, I am, rather than "is", leaving an immediately following reproach of solipsism to be rebutted later.

I (*ego*) is immediately certain of itself, whether it be I myself or you or God or they or all together or none of these. But it is not consciousness as abstracted from self-consciousness (whichever was prior in appearance) but, rather, the latter. Yet I is equally something concrete, the most concrete of all, the being conscious of itself as infinitely varied world. As infinitely varied this is not one possible world among many merely. World is world, *universum*. This was the error of the Argument from Design, to argue from the world's supposed particular character, to God. Not merely, again, is it there being a world (i.e. *any* world, rather than this or that kind of world, that points to God (Herbert McCabe, "God"¹⁸) or, here, to I, but there being world as such, infinite *object*, though this, the objectivity, is but a moment, we shall find. Concreteness thus corresponds here to Object (the category), as set over against Subjectivity, I.

That I is the beginning and ground of philosophy, as in the Cartesian revolution that Hegel accepts, calls for the isolation, even the seclusion (*Absonderung*) of this, the Concrete, as, so to say, an ever-present, unmentioned essence, the unconscious because absolute paradigm, thereby

¹⁸ See "God" title of a series of articles appearing some years ago in *New Blackfriars*, U.K.

transcending all paradigm in or of self-consciousness. This beginning, this secretion and conscious separation, which is consciousness of separation merely and not abstract, is the absolute act whereby I gets purified of and/or from itself and appears as abstract I, conscious of itself. This, as still abstract, is clearly a mere moment, as it were belonging to philosophy as itself taken in the abstract.¹⁹

But this pure I is not something immediate, not the well known, usual I of our consciousness. Science, true knowledge, should not, cannot be tied thus immediately and universally (for each) to this, to merely finite subjectivity, after all a mere phenomenon *qua* finite. That act which I is would have really to be nothing other, nothing less than the raising (of self) to the standpoint of pure or absolute knowing, where the difference between the subjective and the objective has vanished away, is "spirited away" as one might say.

But thus immediately to demand, or postulate, such an elevation to universality of, precisely, I, this is a subjective postulate in itself. To show itself (*sich zu erweisen*) as truly required the moving forward or progress of the concrete I from immediate consciousness to pure knowing in and of itself, through its own necessity, must be demonstrated (*aufgezeigt*) and set forth, as is done in the body of the work this essay introduces and as was done at the close of *The Phenomenology of Mind* and as will be done in "The Philosophy of Spirit" (*Enc.* III).

I think it is important to see here that this self-conscious I is not reducible to a mere requirement of intellectual experience. It is rather a matter of seeing what the immediate I really entails or, mediately, is. It is not, namely, and cannot be, anything contingent. It is necessary and even necessary being. I, conscious of self, cannot be some chance addition to the supposed human community that *happens* to be identical with the I that I find myself to be. That is, I have already in a sense performed that (scientific) conversion Hegel is requiring. But does everybody make this conversion? Such a question is absolutely inadmissible here. For who or what is "everybody"? I who make it, this conversion, am thereby found to be the universal I, absolute subjectivity, as much "everybody" as is everybody or anybody. There is even a corollary such that any person just is the implicit *making* of such a conversion, which is thus no conversion at all, since the contingent I, understanding therewith a contingent consciousness, is not a reality such as is required from which to make a conversion. That is why I referred here to *The Phenomenology of Mind* as

¹⁹ Cf. *Enc.* 552: "the truth, in its philosophical phase, is after all only in one of its forms."

an impossible book, the ladder one throws ungratefully away, in Wittgensteinian, but also Hegelian, terms. Either this, consciousness of self as of necessity is implicit to the babe in arms or the babe in arms is not a person. The same applies to the family dog, by contrast most often seen as a kind of representational (*Vorstellend*?) sketch of a person, merely. Take, or make, your choice. If self-consciousness is or can be thus implicit then, once again, the whole necessary relation, as it is often assumed, of language to thought is called in question (do babies have no language?). All judgements are false, states Hegel, which means, as McTaggart, for one, sees, that in an eternity, ideally, they are not or would not be made. No judgments, no language, but the Concept only, the Word (*verbum interius*).

Without such a demonstration, this objective (self-)movement, Hegel goes on to say, pure knowing, so-called, also if defined and determined (*bestimmt*) as intellectual intuition, appears rather as an arbitrary standpoint or even as just one of the empirical states (*Zustände*) of consciousness one person may find as it were pre-existing in himself or herself, or be able to bring about, another person not, however.

What Hegel is setting his face against here is what Marx was later to call mystification, bringing the opposite of immediate clarity, namely glaring (*grellere*) confusion and total disorientation. It has already, he says, given rise to the most gross and complete misunderstanding among the public (*nach aussen*). Here he surely refers to Fichte, but also, no doubt, to aspects of Novalis's writings and that of other romantics, the "beautiful souls" of the *Phenomenology*, whatever his final view of, say, Hölderlin. It may be, however, that he "protests too much", that he has more in common with these thus falling by the wayside than he "lets on" here, in suggesting which I make no charge of dishonesty. Hegel asked to be buried beside Fichte.

Inasmuch, then, as the pure I must be essential and pure knowing, while pure knowing is posited in the individual consciousness *only* through this "absolute act" of self-transcendence (*Selbst-erhebung*) and is not immediately accessible to it, just so is the advantage lost that should spring from thus beginning philosophy. Such a beginning, namely, was to be something directly familiar, that each immediately finds in himself, to which further reflection can thus be joined. *Rather*, this pure I is in its "abstract essence" something unknown to our usual consciousness. It is not found there explicitly, whatever be the implicit case such as I have touched on above. Without its being thus implicit, a kind of inbuilt enthymeme, the error would not after all have been made.

Here we see the disadvantage of exchanging Being for this (*Täuschung*). It is that while the talk should be or is taken as being of empirical self-consciousness it is really of something far-removed from this consciousness. This is mystification. The definition or determination (*Bestimmung*) of pure knowing as I brings with it the continual reminder of the subjective I, the limits of which should be forgotten. It keeps present the picture (*Vorstellung*) as of situations and relations which arise in the further unfolding of I in everyday consciousness as if they were all the time present and could have been found there. We may add that even if this is true it is not something that could constitute the beginning (of Logic and Science) as Hegel has here outlined it. This, we may note, was precisely the reaction of the Catholic authorities to the new (quasi-Hegelian) philosophy of "Ontologism" (Gioberti, Rosmini), that scientifically the method was wrong, as could not be said of Aristotelico-Thomism, to which they engineered a return. Nonetheless today's hero in that world is the newly Blessed (*beatus*) John Henry Newman, neither Ontologist nor Thomist but a true adherent of Hegel's lodestar of valid "development", not got, however, merely or maybe not at all, in his case, we do not know, from any reading of Hegel.

In fact pure knowing takes away from I its signifying of something limited, having an object as irremediably or inherently (*unüberwindlichen*) opposed to it. Hence it was at the least superfluous to retain this subjective attitude (*Haltung*) in the definition of the pure essence (*Wesens*) as I. It is rather the knowing itself that knows, we might say, in a universal identity in differentiation of all with all. This would be the opposite of that confusion of which Hegel accused Schelling. Reflexively, the knowing I itself is sublated in this universal knowing, along with all need to refer to or conceive an Object or *Gegen-stand*. It is not simply that I, as individual, is (or am) disregarded at the "scientific" or philosophical level, though so far as we have come here this might seem a sufficient understanding. Rather, it is shown, in the course of the dialectic, that I in itself is not (in being), never was and never could be. It is our own destiny to be sublated, to pass from shadows to reality. This is the substance of *Vorstellungen* (pl.) in religion, as reflexively passing at once to philosophy, since, again, this is indeed their substance, deriving from Absolute Spirit (i.e. revealed), the substance of immortality or of "no birth, no death". Whether the I found captive in the shadows survives in this transition or disappears is probably not much more than a choice of expression, properly viewed, as in "I live, not yet I", applied however first of all to this very present, now. This is the very movement of *The Phenomenology of Mind*. Our concern now, however, is simply with the simplicity required for a Beginning.

Not only does this I put forward here as putative Beginning introduce disturbing ambiguity, as retaining its limited and determinate meaning. It remains, more closely considered, a subjective I. Science, that is, is destroyed²⁰, in intimate self-contradiction, if this is put forward as the beginning of science. Put differently, the very deliverance from deception, desire for which was the motor of the Cartesian philosophy, is falsely sublated. This was precisely the conservative reproach against the new liberalism, that it "overthrows the nature of an opinion" as either true or false. It is thus of the highest interest to find Hegel opposing this, in view of his, so to say, total rearrangement of common notions in general. Rather, he brings to light the arrangement latent in the greatest philosophies, whereby the last or first truth governs all, all being, all truth, all good.

Really the development of knowledge as proceeding from the I shows this subjectivity. It shows that the object has and retains, on such a scheme (*darin*), its character of being an other for the I. It shows that the I from which one thus begins is not pure knowing such as overcomes the opposition of conscious awareness in the attainment of truth. It is rather held fast in mere appearance or seeming. As he had said earlier it might be just one more of many such phenomena, though then not even this could be said or thought.

It is essential to note here that if I, in itself supposedly, could be put forward as pure knowing or determined (*bestimmt*) as intellectual intuition and as Beginning, then knowledge thus taken has not to do with what is in itself or inwardly present (*vorhanden*). It has rather to do with the being of the inward in thinking specifically, the character that such inwardness has in just such a state (of apprehension). But whatever of intellectual intuition or - if its object be called the Eternal, the Divine, the Absolute - whatever of the eternal or absolute is present in the beginning of knowledge can be none other than the "first, immediate, simple determination".

*

Where I is taken as starting-point, instead of being a position reached, as it is even in Descartes, we have that destruction of science referred to by Aquinas (ST Ia 85, 2). Descartes starts from what cannot be doubted, rather. That he puts it in the form of what just I cannot doubt belongs purely to the chosen form, called "meditation". In his *Regulae* ("Rules for the Direction of the Understanding"), however, he looks rather for "clarity

²⁰ Cp. Aquinas, *Summa theol.* Ia 85, 2.

and distinctness" as first principles of Method as distinct from Content. These, however, Method and Content, Hegel identifies (EL237), whether or not with Descartes, and the whole development of science, in mind.

He remarks that the intellectual intuition referred to as pure knowing would, if taken as the beginning, make knowing to be no longer concerned with what may be "in itself or inwardly" at hand (*an sich oder innerlich vorhanden*) as, *qua* knowledge, it must be. Rather, this "intuition" would have to do with the presence of the inward, i.e. the "in itself" just referred to, in thinking, sc. consciousness. It would, in other words, have to do with the determination or specific character such inwardness had in or as this presence to consciousness, as distinct from its inwardness as its being-in-itself as the object of just knowledge. Hegel's phraseology is awkward here but unambiguous.

In Cartesian terms, this would be the seeming-to-see of "representative perception", as found later in Locke and others. Hegel correctly widens the issue, making explicit the implicit. Knowledge as such is at stake, since thus viewed nothing is ever immediately known, not even these. They themselves seem or appear, *ad infinitum*, as thus appearing exclusively inwardly. Thus Aquinas:

Some say that our cognitive powers know nothing except their own passions. This is manifestly false, for two reasons. First, what we know and science are the same. But science would not then be of things outside the (individual) mind. So the Platonists say that all sciences are of ideas actually understood. Second, it would follow that whatever seems so is so, plus that contradictories would be equally true. The judgement of the knowing power will concern that which it judges, *ad infinitum*. Every judgement will be true, even every sensation. Therefore we must say that knowing is mediated by what appears (species) as a likeness (*similitudo*). The species (*id quo*) is only itself understood (*id quod*) secondarily, when the mind reflects on its own act. What is understood first is the reality, *res*, a being. Thus it was said that like is known by like, as Aristotle says (III De anima, 38) that not the stone but its likeness through which (*quo*) it is known is in the mind.²¹

Aristotle in fact accounts for specifically linguistic reference (*suppositio*) in this same way if, as with Hegel, we extend likeness (*species*) to include a conventional standing-for as sign, precisely unlike as conventional, of course, but equally mediation, in which the two disparate relations are "alike". For being as mediated and being in the mind only are the same being. The *ens rationis* is still *ens* because to be treated of at all it must be

²¹ Aquinas, *Summa theol.* Ia 85, 2.

taken as reality, *res*. In this sense, as Plato put it, the mind (*anima*) "has learned everything" (*Meno*). Hence Hegel describes the doctrine of immediate intuition of God or self as basis for knowledge (Jacobi) as "reactionary", saying that, rather,

in the very act of mediation the mediation itself vanishes. And to show that, in point of fact, there is a knowledge which advances neither by unmixed immediacy nor by unmixed mediation, we can point to the example of Logic and the whole of philosophy²²

or again,

Jacobi... failed to recognise the genuine nature of essential thought - by which it cancels the mediation in the very act of mediating.²³

Hegel remarks further that the whole of the Doctrine of Essence will be, concerned with this "intrinsic and self-affirming unity of immediacy and mediation" (*Enc.* 66). The two are "linked together, - immediate knowledge being actually the product and result of mediated knowledge". Thus what Hegel is arguing for in the beginning as (necessary) beginning, pure being, will be later, and even "immediately", in the Logic, sublated (as Nothing, as Becoming). The rest of this chapter in the *Encyclopaedia* logic on Jacobi's "crude" theory remains essential reading when considering, as here, the relation of the mediate and the immediate.

*

Whatever name be given this richer in expression than pure being can only be concerned with how such an absolute enters into thinking (or conscious?) knowing and into the expression of this knowing. Intellectual apprehension is supposed to imply violent dismissal of mediation and of external or a *posteriori* demonstration. What it more expressly directs us to than a simple immediacy, however, is a concrete reality, something containing in itself a variety of determinations. Yet, as already remarked, the expression and positing of such an entity is a movement of mediation beginning from one of these determinations and proceeding to the others, though these too refer back to the first.²⁴ It is, namely, a movement that

²² *Enc.* 75.

²³ *Enc.* 50, cf. also 64.

²⁴ Compare the procedure in the initial treatise "On the One God" in Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*. All is built up, after the preceding "Five Ways", from a first apprehension, viz. of the divine simplicity or, negatively, lack of composition.

even so may not be arbitrary or assertive but must unfold or mediate itself rather. What is begun from in such an exposition is not the concrete itself, already specified as such, but only the simple immediate (apprehension, in knowledge), from which the movement goes out. Besides, if anything concrete is made to be the beginning then there is no proof such as the determination of the connection together of the things contained in the concrete requires.

In fact the subject or the one beginning to know not only forgets the existence of others. He overcomes or sublates his own "subjective" existence as well. Hence we queried "conscious" in the previous paragraph. Reference to I becomes superfluous, as Hegel says, because it is seen to be no longer there. Knowing knows itself. This is what is indeed expressed (*vorstellt*) in the Trinitarian doctrines as usually defined and set forth in theological and related discourse. This cannot be coincidence merely. In the mind of Hegel, though, one may if one wishes speak of him as sublating a theological moment into his philosophy or, just so, conversely.

What is begun from in such a representation is not the composite concrete itself but the simply immediate (within it) from which the movement of just knowing necessarily starts. Otherwise, when something composite is made the beginning, once again, then all proof of the elements bound together within this composite is lacking. As Leibniz had said, if there are complexes there must be simples, even should they be the a-tomic propositions or "facts" of the early and surely also later Wittgenstein.

If, therefore, in speaking of the Absolute or Eternal or God (and here God should have most undisputed right, as truly and/or definitionally making the beginning)... if there lies more in the thought of these than in that of pure Being, yet in knowing, conscious thinking and not merely representing, it shall come forward first. This more, however rich one may wish to see it as, must be what first comes forward in and as knowing. As first and strictly first it can only be a Simple, something non-composite, since only so is it nothing more than pure beginning. Only the immediate is simple, since only in the immediate is there still not a going from one to another. So whatever will be said later or later be found in the richer forms of presenting the Absolute or God is in the beginning an empty word and, indeed, only being (*nur Sein*). This simple, having otherwise no further meaning, this empty being (or nothing) is therefore the beginning of philosophy (whatever such being may later be found to be!)... This insight is so simple, viz. that this Beginning neither needs nor can receive

reparation or further introduction. All preliminary reasoning can only intend its own suspension.²⁵

²⁵ This is Hegel's conclusion of the discussion (Suhrkamp 5, p.79), in free translation or paraphrase, as that with which discussion of this Hegel's question of a beginning should begin.

B: THEOLOGICAL

CHAPTER SEVEN

THEMATISING REVELATION

Introduction. Acknowledging a revelation, in the sense of an intervention from on high, is in our culture the mark of the "religious" option. As such it is routinely distinguished from "mere" religious philosophies such as Buddhism or various "individualistic" views and practices. What cannot be denied is that there is a tradition to be followed or not, as there is in all cultures. It was on this point that even Socrates was condemned. Yet his follower Plato often not so much clinched as concluded his argumentation by appeal to the mythical traditions of his Greek society's religions.¹

The division this introduces in man's mind is often valued as embodying self-transcendence or transcendence of our nature, which comes in this context to be viewed as wicked or "fallen". In Hegel such wickedness is extended, as a characterisation, to any deviation from current *Sittlichkeit* or conventionality inclusive, somewhat shockingly, of such deviation as expressing conscience or conscientiousness. Yet in this way the stigma of wickedness is overcome and we rejoin Goethe's serene acceptance of the Unzulängliche at the close of his *Faust*. McTaggart equally concludes that we should not, cannot without dishonesty, wish to be better than we are.² This might seem to contradict the Apostolic predicament of *Romans* 7 ("The evil that I would not, that I do," etc.), yet there it is the doomed effort to obey an imposed law that is chiefly engaged with. This in turn, of course, raises a problem about *Sittlichkeit*, surely equally imposed even though, as tradition, having its roots in nature. Furthermore, Hegel's own philosophical efforts seem to many anything but *sittlich* in the sense of conventional. This, however, underlines an (his?) ambiguity concerning wickedness.

Wickedness, that is to say, becomes identified with finitude as such. Its more spectacular forms, murder, genocide, should not therefore be

¹ Cf. J. Pieper, *Über die platonischen Mythen*, Kösel, Munich 1965.

² J.M.E. McTaggart, *Studies in the Hegelian Cosmology*, Cambridge University Press, 1901.

separated off from our shared finitude as more "radical".³ There but for the grace of God go I is the again traditional teaching of the saints. That is, just as all sin participates in this final enormity, so this enormity too is part and parcel of the falsity of everything finite. What can fail, says Aquinas, sometimes does, adding that there is no rock-bottom to sinning. One can always be worse. Yet it remains finite as *semper in subjecto*, always in a basically good created being, such as Satan would always be. For nor does Aquinas make the moral good equivocal with other forms of good, as we seem to find in Kant. Here too Hegel seems to rejoin the older strand of thought, prior to the modern doctrine of "values" as somehow divorced from being and the actual. This, all the same, might seem to gloss over the orthodox teaching that sin is an infinite offence, because against an infinite being. Such transposition of forensic discourse, however, is thereby figurative and belongs to religion as an imperfect form of apprehending this content. Really God does not command and so, in that sense, there are no sins⁴, only wickedness, as a name for the finite, from which we have to extricate ourselves, in thought as in deed.

Attempts were made from the beginning to soften this confrontation of the traditional and the natural, the infinite and the finite. This in fact is the whole sense of myth. Thus the author(s) of Genesis, no doubt themselves already following a tradition, cite a covenant earlier than that with Abraham and his descendants, one made with Noah as sole representative of humanity, along with his family, after the Flood. The pledge of this burying of the hatchet, patching up of the quarrel between God and man, self and super-ego, was God's "bow in the clouds", the rainbow. Nietzsche, in perhaps unthinking echo of this, compared forgiveness, the mark of the superior man to come, to a "rainbow after long storms". This was a pointer to the pivotal nature of forgiveness as recognising finitude. "Forgive them Father for they know not what they do." Yet they knew as well as anyone ever knows. Hegel also makes mutual forgiveness pivotal in the progress (beyond art and its "religion") towards true religion when criticising "the beautiful soul" in his *The Phenomenology of Mind*.

Behind this rainbow-covenant God's dealings with the first man of all, and his woman, are presented in the same way. There will be peace between us if you remain within certain limits. The fact is that the question

³ Hannah Arendt's perspective: see her *Origins of Totalitarianism*. (3 vols.): Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., New York 1951.

⁴ See our "On Thinking the Tradition – III: The Sin-Paradigm", *The Downside Review*, January 2007, pp. 19-37, also edited version of this in our *Reason's Developing Self-Revelation*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle 2013, Chapter 3: "Beyond the Sin-Paradigm".

about our and the world's finitude was not raised, is only darkly touched on in the text.⁵ Consciousness as to these issues became strong in the nineteenth century. So the theory of traditionalism should not have surprised anybody, though Church authorities quickly condemned it. De Bonald, its founder, argued that man must have attained speech by revelation (hence "traditionalism"), on the questionable ground that one cannot think without speech and so cannot invent or attain to it.

Revelation, like traditions in general or moral teaching, is perfected in a process of internalisation, precisely the difference between education and indoctrination. This is referred to sometimes as "the birth of Christ in the soul", which the Nativity festivities should prefigure. In this way the outside becomes the inside, as dialectic shows, and the two categories are superseded together. This is why here we will show how revelation as a category finally becomes absorbed within philosophical thinking as "accomplishing" religion.

The truths of faith cannot be said to be beyond Reason absolutely. Reason, in fact, cannot but be absolute, as the subject, any subject, cannot be other than subjectivity itself, intrinsically repelling conditioning by any alien other. Thus the true God, finally beyond idolatry, must be intimior me mihi, closer to me than I am to myself, as Augustine expressed it. I am that, say the Indians, "I in you and you in me", says our own tradition, where we are "all members one of another".

Faith, that is, naturally culminates in "the birth of Christ in the soul" and philosophical enlightenment, if it is ever to be such, cannot be other than that. In so far as this birth of Christ is, professedly, birth of "the Son of Man" it may be said to happen or to have happened eternally. The intentions of Reason are one with their execution. In this sense man, every man, is an infinity, not constrained from without. Only thus is he end and not means. Only thus is he truly the unknown Christ we serve or spurn, as the Gospel says he is. Each counts for all (and no one for less than all: the theme of Kant's "kingdom of ends"). If philosophy anticipated or "accomplished" this initially figurative presentation, so liable to be misunderstood as mere imputation, yet philosophy can also be said only to have achieved this post factum, when the religious praxis and belief was in place. We may beg to discern a "backward causation" here, in so far as revelation is precisely that revelation which is the eternal Reason, none other than self-manifestation, as we shall argue below. Thus such philosophy contains all of the content of religion under its own more perfect form and is not a watered-down version, but a result, as the

⁵ Cf. Hegel: *Encyclopaedia* 50, on the world's "nullification" in thought.

dialectic terminates as result in the absolute. Just so, the biologists tell us, the eye would necessarily (and therefore dialectically) "evolve"⁶ in nature, as has happened, consequently, in at least four otherwise distinct natural histories. The content of absolute religion quite naturally passes over into a higher form, which is another way of saying, in transposition, that philosophy is religious.

Revelation as covenant. The Jews considered themselves chosen. How can we respect, even share this belief? Hegel maybe considered the claim historically born out and maybe we could accept that too. Perhaps even other groups consider themselves chosen, e.g. certain Australian tribes believe their particular ancestors created the world. The faith claims of around half the world include such an exclusivist approach or at least a claim to privilege. A rejection of intolerance needs to tolerate, even affirm, that. Is it possible? Hegel seems to attempt it.

Jewish writings (one should perhaps say Hebrew or Israelite, since Judaea was just one tribe, though it came to see itself as the "right" or orthodox one) humbly stress their nation's insignificance apart from this selection. They accord the River Jordan and prophets such as Elijah or Elisha healing powers beyond the "great" rivers of, for example, the conqueror Naaman's land.

One can think that this sense of uniqueness comes from the rejection, the intellectual seeing-through, of idolatry. Their God, they came to see, if God, is as such infinite. "The gods of the heathen are nought." There could not be two or more infinite gods. They would not have gone on to abstract this quality from their God or idealise it in itself, like Plato maybe. It is just their God who in earlier tradition "saved" them, who has this quality. Therefore they are as a people important in this transcendent way.

This idea is carried through into Christian theology, as it has to be if this "fulfils" the Law. "I am the way". "No man comes to the Father but through me" and we have started to interpret this "invisibly", talking first of "invincible ignorance" and later using less insulting but still more mysterious schemes to show, in Hannah Arendt's words, writing of John XXIII, that Jesus is for everybody. Not very encouraging for those who have built their lives and wisdom on other teachers they feel bound to consider at least as central. This leads on to the consideration that Jesus is not primarily teacher but "saviour" or mediator (Hegel's preferred term, itself also Biblical and liturgical, however).

⁶ We must look behind this word too.

Here a perspective of absolute idealism offers us a short way through this tangle. Such idealism will also accept the Kantian thesis of a kingdom of ends, again, as implicit in Christian ethics anyhow, one might think (and therefore itself calling for absolute idealism where souls have been capable of it). As I think Hegel especially brings out though, one cannot be an end without being *the* end. All things are yours, St. Paul had said, at the same time as he saw it as necessary that God "shall be all in all". One can't have the all without being it. You are "in" one another. "I in them and they in me." Here Jesus, represented as speaker, equates himself with each of these others distributively and even reciprocally. "Because one died for all, therefore all died", says Paul, mysteriously enough. It is through Jesus that this *Idea* comes into the world, uniquely or not.

We need a man who is "all things to all men". "Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart." Regarding uniqueness, this man is put as saying, in the fourth Gospel, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold" (this might be the evangelist's finite interpretation; yet, if taken at face-value, might we not *all* say it, in sympathetic unity, identification, moral to ontological, with others?). Aquinas allows that God might incarnate severally, only saying that each "Christ" would be the same (divine) person. It is often asked today if God could have "appeared" on other planets also. The answer, also of most orthodox, is that we do not know. So he could. But if it is possible on other planets, then why should it not be on this one? The difference is merely contingent.

As for "appearing", the Docetist heresy, first century, taught that in Christ God only appeared, i.e. he was not truly man. But for idealism we are all appearances misperceiving ourselves dualistically, speaking immediately of a "soul-thing" (as does the associated unmediated theology). If everyone (and what is a "one"?) is in fact such an appearance, then a) it is no heresy to say so, b) it is that much easier to envisage plural or even general incarnation(s). The mystical Christ, the body where "eagles gather together", is the real, the actual Christ. "This also is thou, neither is this thou." "I live yet not I." These are the watchwords both of mysticism and of absolute idealism. This means that dogmatic formulations are in essence open. One makes, we make, affirmative judgments, also as to seeming right or thinking that one is right. If this is possible, meaningful (is it?), then not only is it possible to be right but right is somewhere (or everywhere) actualised, one might want to argue.⁷ Talk of paradigms, voluntarism and the creative nature of all texts can help here. Or, as Jesus

⁷ Against this as final argument, though (as used, at least as regards the first part of its conclusion, to possibility merely, by G.E.M. Anscombe, for example), we have Hegel's distinction between true and merely "correct" judgments.

put it, don't just believe what I say but believe in me "for the very works' sake", look at what I do.

The disciples, Galilean fishermen, were bound to interpret Jesus in their categories, "This is he", just as they reacted to his death, supremely, in their categories. "It was not possible that death could hold him." Surely it was not and Hegel applies this to thinking as such. So one may leave open questions as to the literalness of the resurrection accounts without refusing the genuine sense in which one may believe them. I do not have to say either that "those scoundrels" stole the body away or that Jesus survived and went to Pakistan. But nor need I here enter further into exegetical questions concerning the varying accounts of "appearances" in the four Gospels. Schillebeeckx, in his *Jesus*, mentions the claim that for one group of disciples the corporeal or literal (re-) surrection was a comedown in Christian conception, and that this is the true explanation of the lost ending of St. Mark. It was not lost and the injunction there, i.e. at the end of the Gospel as it stood without or before the addition, against seeking the living among the dead stands, whether or not the tomb still held, as just might seem implied in this question, "the dead", though all the first preaching as recounted in the Lucan Acts of the Apostles speaks against this. So I wish, if you like, to "save" orthodoxy through all the styles and standards of human thinking down the ages, the programme of "the development of doctrine"⁸. Newman himself declared that "orthodoxy stands or falls with the mystical interpretation of scripture". In any case if such development is itself a doctrine then it is not itself exempt from development. As for scripture, inspiration on one theory means no more than acceptance by the community of the text in question, inclusive therefore of its interpretation of it, "understanding spiritual things spiritually" as the Apostle put it.

Regarding the doctrine of Revelation, this concept too has to be "thematised" or critically examined in a formal and conscious way. It was always close to that of Manifestation or Epiphany. The revealed is the manifest, as Hegel stresses. God is manifested in Christ and hence, it is there confirmed, in himself. The categories of natural versus supernatural, epitomised in miracle, obscure this. What is revealed is what we see. Those revelatory experiences of "joy" C.S. Lewis focussed on, for example, are all "transfiguration" of the everyday, and do not in themselves need to be reduced to a call to tread the way to a future bliss. The future as such is a "being of reason" only, Aquinas had already taught. Such bliss is not so much not yet, which would make it temporal, as it is hidden from us merely, as was the glory intrinsic to Jesus in the tradition,

⁸ J.H. Newman: *On the Development of Christian Doctrine*, 1845.

and yet it is not. "Does the fish soar to find the ocean?" Such glory is revealed, McTaggart argues, to every man or woman who falls in love, for a season at least. The incarnate "one" is reflected in the eyes of the transfigured Beatrice (for her poet-lover). Yet she is not easily recognised as who she was. "Look well. We are, we are indeed Beatrice." "Is this the face...?" The disciples do not "look well" enough until "the stranger" breaks bread. This tradition is continued by Tolkien's tale of the strange old man in the forest of Fangorn in *The Lord of the Rings*. This may be dismissed as more "fictional" still than the saga of Beatrice. Beatrice was a real lost beloved, someone may say. Yet one can as well have the falling in love experience referred to for or within a story or storied "character" as, where the barbarity of the distinction aimed at becomes clearer, for a piece of music. "Fled is that music. Do I wake or sleep?" "I live yet not I..." "The just shall live by faith," In fact and just as an experience the essential occurs within one's subjectivity in every case equally. This is the basic meaning of faith in the or in a tradition, rather than any downgrading of faith as against knowledge.

A lot of the limitations and intolerance of orthodoxy revolve around views as to the opportuneness or permissibility of utterances at a given time or place. The guardians of orthodoxy, "servants of the servants of God", take a lot upon themselves here, as they seem to feel they have to. Who are these guardians? Why should we have them? Well, let us not a priori reject all need for them in guarding our inner freedom. The centre is everywhere, there too.

The indeterminacy of the self. "We (you) sit with Christ in the heavenly places" (St. Paul). The worshipping or liturgical community believes itself in heaven. Christ on the Cross, on the altar, sees and loves each one of them totally. Each has the whole, the unity, within himself, McTaggart urges, who seldom if ever himself "went to Mass". He refers to the reality liturgy would set forth.

As he saw you he also saw them, writes Lewis's diabolical Screwtape to his apprentice, describing the final escape from the two of them of a "Christian soul". Lewis also has the heroine of his later novel, *Till We Have Faces*, cry out, "How can the gods see us face to face until we have faces?" But who are these gods? Popular theorists argue sometimes that gods, superior beings from elsewhere, spawned the human race on earth, not, this time, by mating with the sons or rather daughters of men, as did the angels in Genesis, but by advanced technology. Such "gods" though are clearly finite, since infinite transcendence requires total immanence,

the outside being inside and vice versa. Any viable creationist ⁹ theory must be compatible with this. Thus creation, like any divine act, one with his essence, is extra-temporal, eternal, including any putative creation of time itself. God in creating produces things without change in himself. After that we can go on to ask whether the notion of change is itself finally consistent or not rather as finite, and therefore false, as the objects it posits. This would be the *Aufhebung* of "becoming".

Reincarnation, let us now consider, is the belief of a large portion of the human race while even the Christians believe in incarnation without the "re". Incarnation in itself, I would suggest, insinuates the first heresy concerning it, viz. Docetism, that Christ only "appeared" as a man. Don't we all, if all flesh, flesh universally, is as such mere appearance? This is the conclusion of Absolute Idealism, while Docetism only gets off the ground as specifically a heresy, separating Christ from real humanity, on the contrary Realist supposition.¹⁰ So the true incarnation of the incarnate "one" would not be denied in stating this later conclusion, viz. absolute idealism. To become incarnate, in that case, just is no more than to take on an untransfigured appearance.

The perspectives transcend reincarnation however. We are "members one of another" as God is "all in all", "I in them and they in me... that they all may be one in us." One may assume that the prayer of the one chosen is here granted, or represents the reality rather. He states what is eternally and necessarily so. It has been rationally demonstrated in the more perfect form of philosophy.

"I will see you again." "You will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of glory." There was no need to take this as a fallacious prophecy concerning the later experiences of those present, i.e. in their lifetime. The reference, should these texts be venerated as normative, would rather be, still, to the End, but an End that all will see, if we do not behold it eternally indeed, ourselves constituting it. Spirit is neither born nor dies and as necessary we more than exist. Existence abstracts, as a category, from immanent otherness.

Thus the end of "time", created by backward causality of the last member of the series, is not a temporal end but an end to temporality, where we see ourselves in our last or final and only real incarnation, which

⁹ *Deus creando producit res sine motu*, agrees Aquinas, at *Summa theol.* Ia 45, 3.

¹⁰ Aristotle, speaking for the ancient world in which Christianity arose has a curious halfway position here. Cf. *On the Soul*, 423a 1ff. Flesh is an "attached medium" (of perception). It is not even clear that it is an or the organ (of touch). Thus we can equally feel roughness or smoothness at the end of a pencil, argues Merleau-Ponty. Cf. the superb commentary on *De anima* by Eugene Gendlin.

is spirit and so no incarnation at all. Here stand ten thousand times ten thousand or, more truly, a multitude "without number" (what kind of multitude is that?), infinitely differentiated yet such that each is necessary to the whole. The "angels" of the smallest children "behold the face of our (my) father in heaven". The doctrine of the guardian angels (of children and others), that is, is one of at least some kind of identity with Spirit beyond empirical consciousness, as "I and my father are one".

Twins can experience a most perfect identity, uncanny to others. We all, though, are not merely begotten of one mother-father, but are begotten perpetually, at every actual moment, in one another. For being in the other is constitutive of its other, viz. of self. I "know as I am known" and am thus necessary to the whole as having it within myself.

The divine simplicity, the perfect whole which infinity necessarily is, can be and has been thought in terms of the Trinitarian relationships, without contradiction. So it can just as well be thought in terms of this relation here (of infinite differentiation in identity), which actually annihilates relation (a finite category after all, along with substance and all possible accidents), of all with all. It is a relation of the whole with itself in an infinite transparency of self-conscious and/or self-constituting perception. In this way man, spirit, is revealed "in glory" or as absolute behind the veils of time and space, of transitional "nature".

The Trinity is not hereby denied. It may be thought of as constitutive of all consciousness within itself, having the other as other and yet having it, as it were intensively, all multitude being finally denied or superseded (*aufgehoben*). Self just is its other, known and so realised as and in its other. The final return of other to self, to other of its other, is self-constitutive. It constitutes self in the final bond of love. Thus reality is spirit, blowing where it will so that you cannot tell where it comes from. This is the significance of the original insistence on the Trinitarian notion as a mystery or as "above" reason. The meaning is that reason, in its inmost self, is creative or revelatory, "at play". Hegel's characterisation of the "notion as pure play" coincides with the personified Wisdom (*sapientia*) as described in the Proverbs attributed to Solomon. It, Reason, *Vernunft*, is not as it were enslaved by self-manifestation but is manifestation simply, the manifest, the revealed or unveiled, but not as if "at first" or originally veiled. We may say it transcends itself ceaselessly, since this is what it is, viz. reconciliation, not merely of self and other, but of self into other. Self, that is, is paradoxical in its notion, as personality for Hegel, is universality as its constituent principle..

Thus the outside is the inside and in looking out, upon nature, upon brothers and sisters, man apprehends him/herself, "all glorious within". He

sees the "thoughts of one mind", which is his own. Thomas Aquinas, in arguing from a premise that "It is evident that it is this man who thinks" (in *opusc.* "On a Common Intellect"), begs all the philosophical questions he himself elsewhere tackles. Man, neither one nor many, is "at home with himself", "the great Apocalypse". I am that. Finally the only subjectivity is absolute subjectivity. In seeing that we leave ourselves behind, kick the ladder away, as Hegel found and reported in his day, as in his critique of the specifically *a posteriori* proofs of God in the "Little Logic" and elsewhere, e.g. *Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God*..

To make things more perspicuous, inclusive of what we are doing here, I add that the view I am offering here is my view, my thought, which I, as subject, write down for readers. In the same way, or similarly, God the Father knows all of us, inclusive of the relations of identity and necessity and reciprocal interchange advanced, if they be true, in his one Word ever returning to him in Love. What is God? God is whatever is beyond the horizon of our knowledge or, equally, most deeply within it. Therefore God must be compatible with or, rather, authentically revealed in whatever Reason discloses, the unfalsifiable indeed.

Man beyond man. One needs to focus upon the transcendence of the biological in man. One may treat man biologically, as is done in Aristotle's *On the Soul* or Desmond Morris's *The Naked Ape*. Seeing oneself, or ourselves collectively, however, as one of nature's species is not "the natural attitude" we easily slip into pretending it to be. Aristotle's definition of man as a rational or talking animal is reached by an effort of abstractive thinking. This effort knocks out, for him, other definitional candidates, such as featherless biped, in his search for the essential feature - feature and not features since his account of definition is ordered. There has to be one ultimate difference which limits (defines) the broader category first begun with. This category is itself not given merely. Thus animal, as a genus, is nonetheless a species of a broader category, living being (*zoon*), and so on.

Although one might think that we talk of man as we talk of the elephant or the daffodil we only do this by a definite, somewhat hard-nosed decision. It is mediated, as Hegel would say. Many cultures preserve more consistently a strong awareness of the gulf between "us" and nature or the animals, whether or not this leads to a lack of respect for "life". So in compensation, maybe, we have a strong awareness of the individual, of subjectivity, as other or prior. According to Heidegger, only man *ex-ists*. We look back to Aristotle with this in mind and find there, implicitly, the same insight.

Morris concedes that he makes his examination of the naked, if rational, ape qua zoologist, i.e. not as Desmond Morris the man in his entirety.¹¹ So also Aristotle arrives at a more final estimate of man (and of much else) in his *Metaphysics*, when endeavouring to think reality as a whole without discriminative attention, to think being as being, in his words.¹² Noting that such biological definitions are pre-patterned to give one a composite he concludes that this composite is determined by some one element or "part", since any being is one, which will therefore be more essentially the being, viz. its "form", than is the composite of everyday. This part is more the whole than the whole composed of parts! In other words the schema part-whole is here superseded as inapplicable and Aristotle has in fact passed to the less abstract but more metaphysical schema of act and potency. The form ("soul") is the act, the actuality, of a man or woman. The organised body, made up of matter, is potential to this act, which makes it entirely what it is, such that its final organisation is one with the form, but as viewed potentially. This is only understandable, in my view, under the format of idealism, taken absolutely. Substance as subject (*hypokeimenon*) of properties or accidents, including an organised body (having life potentially), becomes, as nous, absolute or self-bearing subject and ipso facto activity, ultimately one with the first substance of all, as is also the case, regarding this point at least, in the later Augustinian noetic.

Of course there is question still as to what this finally means. But since this form in man is in fact intellect it is arbitrary to continue to posit man as living being in only a biological sense. Biology is not the final science,

¹¹ This, by the way, is a good illustration of Aristotle's thesis that it is the essential form that defines the substance and not some ordered grouping of forms, soul, body etc. "Desmond Morris the man in his entirety" actually refers here, if counter-intuitively, to the "Morrisian" intellect (to say "Morris's intellect" would perpetuate the error), his unitive consciousness, beyond his particular profession. On this view, if I say "I have hurt my finger" I refer to myself as subject, as intellect, as I do not if I say, as I might, "My finger is hurt".

¹² This formula excludes any view of being as equivocal, e.g. as between predicative, existential or, thirdly, "is" of identity. Rather, these senses are all subsumed under the last-named, a relationship of identity in act, be it in logic or reality (cf. Note 3). Even being as *veritas propositionis* is to be thought metaphysically as act, something Aquinas too brings out in his commentary on I *Peri hermeneias* (lect. 5, n.22), explaining predication as identity. The whole endeavour is the very opposite of basing metaphysics upon forms of predication merely. The linguistic predicate has a signification which is *quasi-formalis*, but it does not as such "give the form". For then I could not say, for example, "Matter has no form at all", though this is very likely a true sentence (cf. following note).

does not give the final knowledge, especially not of man. This would have to give the basis of subjectivity referred to above. In Aristotle this takes the form of a lack of clear distinction (or separation, rather) between *nous*, intellect, as creator and thinker of all the world (as in Anaxagoras), and *nous* as the intellect and form of any man, which, he says, perhaps misleadingly, in *De partibus animalium*, "comes from outside". He could as well have said it comes from inside and projects the world outside! The world, abstractions apart, is, in every case where it is spoken of, the world as known by the speaker. In an immediate sense the world as including one subject as pro-jecting it is not identical with the world as including another subject projecting it. It can only be this if every subject, or these two at least, is or are identical with one another. But nor is this impossible or unthinkable. It forms the basis of both the classical account of knowledge and the religio-mystical conception of the community of love, "members one of another".

This move of Aristotle's is in fact connected with the justification of logic (*logica docens*) and of the principle of contradiction (*Metaphysics* IV), of being able to talk about anything. A condition for this is that there be not only accidentals but something necessary, not potentially in or at all in something else. This though, as "move", is still a schema and so one might adopt a Humean attitude in virtue of which the final reality could remain implicit only and self, whether as composite or form, still merely a construct. This would at least reconcile us with all the paradoxes the notion of self gives rise to, leading eventually perhaps to a Buddhist position.

However, if we return to our earlier paragraph, it also leads to a conception of each subject as absolutely other, since he or she "thinks" the world, and not as essentially one individual member of a common biological species. This, further, is the basis for the insight into human equality as based upon fraternal love in freedom. Not "each to count for one and none for more than one", an ancient principle of civic justice and not revolutionary at all, but each to count for all and none for less than all. Each, that is, is end, not means, subject not needing further subject (*hypokeimenon*), in the sense in which "I am the captain of my soul". This means that I, any I, is not to be restricted or imprisoned within the category of a common humanity. He or she is unique, other. He can say: "I am from above, you are from below", where the "you" refers precisely to our "objective" (and "objectivised") view of "the others". Thus "Christology" yields a possible philosophical concept deriving from historical religious thought yet able to situate our anthropology metaphysically. At the same time we vindicate or "accomplish" Christology.

Our attention is invariably selective from actual experience, itself without limit or universal, whether or not involving actualised awareness of this or that individual. Similarly, after all, we do not remember every detail of our past actual life or lives, although every real moment and all that went into that moment's consciousness contributes to how we are now. In that sense each one is a whole world and so, again, quite other than anyone else, with each of whom nonetheless, and just therefore, he is identical. It is the subjectivity that is condition for the universality. The world is nothing other than the minds containing it, nothing other than each of those minds. This, too, is why God is personal. Intellect is differentiated actuality, which is infinity, quite obviously, since only something over again actual could limit or "finitise" it. But it is an unlimitedness of reflection, of which our multiplication is the shadow, unity heaped upon unity in unity. That is, we only get to its unlimitedness by a finite reference to finitude. The infinite itself need not make this or any of its moves or moments, since each, as constitutive of primal freedom, is a strictly infinite or free necessity, imposing rather itself just as freedom. This is why the system or science of logic essentially sublates itself to spirit as the exact other of what it is, but not of what it "was to be" (Aristotle's notion that we translate as "essence").

We can get an idea of this from the widespread recourse to prayer in extreme situations, irrespective almost of a person's religious profession, if any. The explanation of this as a terrified recourse to infantilism is shortsighted. It is better explained by our becoming more fully aware of the dimensions of our infinity, as personal, under stress. Prayer here just is our grasping of our oneness with the Absolute that we made and are making to be the outside, the world, from inside ourselves. This, also, is the reason for any possible effectiveness of prayer.

Aristotle argues for the impossibility of a world without substance, and even without several substances. This is not to say that he claims to have identified substances wherever they may be found. He can allow a stone to be considered a substance, or even a metal, say gold, individualised at second level, and so one speaks of primary or secondary substances, this gold or gold (this metal), this piece of rock or rock. At the same time the argument of the *Metaphysics* progresses towards the identification of a unique because infinite Pure Act as the first or most real substance, the most real Being or Being as such. A coincidence with Spinozism seems preparing. Accidents do not exist. There is not properly accidental being (as in the doctrine of being's univocity). In so far as accidents have being it

is identical with that of the substance concerned, as the form of predication indeed expresses. Socrates is white (but not what white is).¹³

That Aristotle links his metaphysical argument to defence of the principle of non-contradiction is proof that the rationalist metaphysicians such as those of the early modern period were after all in a certain continuity with him. He treats together the principles of argumentation, of logic, and those of substance (Bk. III) and this all-inclusive science of principles is resolved in what he calls God or substance as act.¹⁴ He is not following but resisting forms of speech here, as Hegel will later say that predication is unsuited for knowledge of truth, that "all judgements are false". He means that they are formally imperfect echoes of an eternal perceiving.

In seeming contradiction with this one substance is the claim that there must be several substances for speech to be possible at all. The seeds of the later solution lie in Aristotle's own philosophy however. The form or essential act of the substance most known to us, that of man, is a form possessing all other forms, the place of forms, *forma formarum*, to which the material body is merely passive, mutable and therefore not actually anything. Thus it is in its final development identical with that act which is intellect, i.e. it is nothing else or, as we have suggested, it is its cipher.

It is never clear in Aristotle when this *nous* is the *nous* of the universe and when it is that of an individual or as it were created person. The unclearness, however, reflects real identity of what we have still to discern. Not precisely the Anaxagorean all in all that he would avoid but an all in each and an each in all, nevertheless, is the conclusion to which later philosophy, along with theology and mysticism, or as "holism", will arrive. Substance is not thing as we materialistically imagine, but that act at which thinking arrives. Acts can be mutual and yet one, as in the union of love or an act of murder or of tango, which therefore "takes two", or of an army. Nor, finally, is such act of anything. All participate, not as material parts in a composite whole but as endless facets of one unitary jewel or star. Each "view" of such a thing is a view of the whole. So there is both one substance and many. The unity is closer than organic, thus the many are not parts of some *corpus mysticum*. Just as mystical it is no

¹³ Cf. our "The Supposition of the Predicate", *The Modern Schoolman*, LXXVII, November 1999, pp. 73-78; "Subject and Predicate Logic", *Ibid*, LXVI, January 1989, pp.129-139.

¹⁴ 995b 5-10. Cf. our "First Principles" in *New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics* (ed. Campbell Campbell-Jack, Gavin J. McGrath), Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, UK & Downers Grove, Illinois, USA, 2006, pp.268-271.

longer *corpus*, though we may say so, the whole being everywhere, as the universal community is at local level, the "two or three gathered together".

So the idea that by this account God must be reduced to the impersonality of "the systems view" as encompassing a collective reality misses the perfection of the unity in identity to which reason leads in whatever material version of the dialectic is followed to its summit. Thus Hegel would have been mistaken if he thought that his own version of dialectic had to be free from error at every step in order to lead to the conclusion. What he discovered, rather, and more modestly, was the principle of dialectic itself, whereby every solution short of the perfect one negates itself in a higher synthesis or reconciliation. Eckhart saw this steadily, saying that the eye with which God sees me is the eye with which I see him.

Myself and God, said Newman, are the only two realities. Stopping at this dualism, however, illustrates the intermediate and temporary or finite character of his system (ever a *via media*!) as, *mutatis mutandis*, of that of Thomas Aquinas. This character is confirmed when Newman's appears to stop at the concept of "the development of Christian doctrine", failing to allow explicitly that this notion, this doctrine he puts forward, entails development of such development. So today a more perfect form of the content of faith is called for by cultured and thinking people, such as Hegel and Newman had both, if differently, attempted to supply. Hegel's thesis was that philosophy supplied the properly perfect form for the insight offered to faith but which faith and religion had historically offered to philosophy, which therefore, in humbly receiving the divine message and thinking it through, "accomplishes" it.

This is not theology in the sense of "sacred theology", a mystifying term used to exclude the work of those not in "holy orders" or professionally identified with the religion. Such theology proposes a dual source of truth, viz. nature and grace, a duality only partially overcome by Aquinas's thesis that grace perfects nature. For it perfects it in the sense that nature is only first revealed as anything at all, as form and system, under the action of grace or of absolute Spirit. All is grace, grace is everywhere, and in this way the stock theological term (as we find it in Karl Rahner, say) should finally supersede itself, theology giving up its claim to treat philosophy and reason itself as faith's handmaid. Faith and reason are "two wings" indeed and there is no subordinating hierarchy of wings or, in so far as there is, then it is the other way round. The "vain philosophy" referred to in the Pauline writings is thus invited to give way to a more serious philosophy or wisdom, one that is "from above" or "from outside" (Aristotle's phrase) indeed. Faith, therefore, is not idle complacency

but that urgent beating upon the "cloud of unknowing" which Augustine or Hegel (or Nietzsche or Wittgenstein¹⁵) exemplify, seeking and even finding understanding, intellectum, in a measure.

Theology is in a sense the creation of the thirteenth century, a reaction to the rediscovery of philosophy within an essentially sacral civilisation. In the early Patristic period Christian thinkers referred to their faith as a higher wisdom, one which existing philosophy therefore should naturally incorporate into itself or, rather, incorporate itself into this wisdom. So we find it in Justin or the Cappadocians, or even St. Paul when he set out to explain this new wisdom. The Christ-event was not essentially event in the finite sense but the appearing of something not seen, not realised, before. The Christians were those who realised it. What caused scandal was their opening their ranks on equal footing, something implicitly denied by the later clericalism, to the uneducated and illiterate. Yet such had been implicit in philosophy as practised by Socrates, for example (explicit in *Meno*: the soul, even of this slave-boy, "has learned everything"), who, incidentally, and contrary to the accusation brought against him, had every respect for religion and its traditions. *Agnosce o christiane dignitatem tuam*, cries Augustine therefore, and it is by the most natural transition that incarnation is seen, comes to be seen, as the revelation of the absoluteness of divinity as of the spirit in man. Later philosophy will rediscover Aristotle's insight that it is not man the composite but this unitary intellectual form and "form of forms" which is the immediate reality of which we are conscious, which we bear. It is in this light that the dogmatic formulations can best be interpreted, rather than in the uncritical categories of an *ad hoc* philosophy, of a "naive realism" indeed, since some philosophy, some cultural ambience, was always and always will be present, the treasure in earthen vessels. Philosophy, therefore, has no quarrel with the authority of, say, Scripture. It is precisely such Scripture

¹⁵ These last tend to find themselves ranked by the faithful on the side of the deniers. Yet one might assert that there is no other way of understanding the statement that blasphemy against the Son of Man (but not against the Spirit) will be forgiven than the reconciliatory one exemplified here. After all, the great text does not say I should be your way, truth and life but I am (anyone's who seeks) way, truth and life. *Pace* Newman again one can be "all in one way" also in this positive sense. This very textual greatness, however (of, say, John's Gospel), contributes to our grasp of Christianity as "the perfect religion" (Hegel), imperfect, all the same, precisely as religion itself is, beside philosophy, imperfect in form. However, cf. H. de Lubac's "Catholicism is not a religion", to which he adds "it is religion itself", which may be taken as a way, if oblique, of superseding (*aufheben*) whatever was once meant or striven after by "religion".

that it will want to think and follow through to its hidden meaning, though not necessarily with the presuppositions of an Origen or a Philo. This was the method of Augustine, of *fides quaerens intellectum*, not stopping there as if faith were of another order entirely, relegating philosophy forever to the status of some pagan survival of which one had to take note merely. The approach of the new movement to the particular Jewish culture in which it arose, that of fulfilling a promise, extends, *mutatis mutandis*, to all philosophy everywhere since, it has ultimately to be acknowledged, all religions are true. This follows, in fact, from any claim that the principles of ecumenism, e.g. as elaborated, in maybe preliminary fashion, in a recent (1964) "conciliar" decree, are true. Thus the philosophical claim reinforces the religious devotional claim and *vice versa*. Long ago Porphyry referred to the Jews as "a nation of philosophers", and this was indeed praise. What tends to be overlooked is that this evaluation is strictly and literally true. The Jewish "law" stands or falls by the same criteria as any earlier philosophical system. Thus it was subverted, and simultaneously fulfilled, from within as are all finite philosophies and as, for example, Hegel, contrary to prevalent impression, expected also of his own system as he himself had materially elaborated it.

It is of course true that Christianity sharply distinguishes deeds from words, theory from praxis, but this is a bringing to the light of a characteristic of *theoria* itself, which Aristotle accordingly called "the highest praxis". Ascetic practices, monasticism, "social" programmes or almsgiving, even an explicit element of theurgy, are not definitionally excluded from philosophy just as, contrariwise, salvation by an act of belief, on the other hand, will always have in it a "gnostic" element. Thus martyrdom, the highest Christian act when informed by charity, is essentially witnessing and holding fast to truth under stress, the very essence also of philosophy, of "getting it right" in general.

*

For Descartes the truth of God would guarantee physical reality, the human. Thus we find Newman writing that he is more sure of God's reality than that he has hands and feet. This might mean two things. He believes in them, he might mean, because he believes in God as cause. Yet what the truth of God ought to mean, as I think Newman sees and means here, is that nothing else is true in the same sense, not merely that its truth, like its physical being, is caused by God. Everything finite is untrue, untruth, Hegel declares, here at one with mystical and prophetic tradition. There should be no contradiction between Catherine's "You are she who is

not” and the catechism’s “God made me” or her. In fact either God “makes” me in his own enacting of himself as act or I myself am God, am infinite. It comes to the same.

For this has to entail the true self as one with God. We have suggested that this gives a valid rationale to prayer, better vindicating its seeming naturalness than the idea of a fear-conditioned but irrational resort to an otherwise ignored omnipotence. The identification leads on, however, to the vision of “members one of another”, of all in each and each in all. How literal this was in St. Paul’s thought comes out in his statement that he could wish himself accursed if he could save his people.¹⁶ Religious individualists have never been able to swallow that. They rationalise it as pathetic hyperbole if not fallacy, urging dogmatically that “one’s first duty is to one’s own soul”, to “save” it, confusing this with the maxim not to do evil that good may come. But Paul lives in his people, those he loves. There is no ego, nothing to be anxious about, just to live and to love, the “new” life or law. Loving one’s neighbour as oneself bears also, though not exclusively, the sense of “in place of”, in forgetfulness of, oneself, an egoless or supra-egoic consciousness, which, however, is the reverse of tyrannical. Paul feels not just at one but one with the other(s), moves in and out of others, one could say. He might speak to them, dead or alive, as one speaks to God, with oneself. Here we have also a rationale for telepathic messages, appearances etc. One deludes oneself if one tries to take “I live yet not, but Christ lives in me” as anything less than thorough identification, imagining a material indwelling merely.

The conception leads to that of spiritual being as charted by Hegel and Aristotle, “a notion whose object is the Idea itself”, thought thinking itself, *forma formarum*. This is our essential or substantial being, as a “composite” humanity is not. One has passed here from form and matter as constituents to act and potency as being and its privatively conditioning possibility, from physics as moment to the metaphysical Idea. There is no composition really of an act and of the potentiality it enacts. For only act is. Morris, again, points out that at present population growth rates animals must disappear, however we solve nutritional problems. But then, within the evolutionary scheme, man the naked ape is not eternal. It would be error to use the notion of a jump to the “noosphere” to suggest that phenomenal man will stop evolving. He never has and, within this illusory manner of perception, he never will. Here is yet more reason to situate dogmas rather in idealism than in realism. “The things which are seen”, Paul virtually says, are misperceived, potential merely, here today and

¹⁶ *Epistle to the Romans*, 9.

gone tomorrow. In calling Jesus perfect man orthodoxy means perfect spirit, a perfect individual, i.e. concrete consciousness. Already he lacks certain accidentals, a foreskin, feminine nature, black skin, modern scientific knowledge, which one or other of us might have, and has things we maybe lack, e.g. male nature, "sinlessness". Spirit is ever new, while time, as self-contradiction, vanishes in its arising. This is the point of McTaggart's C-series in incrementation¹⁷, as an "inclusion series" interpreting or, rather, replicating, Hegelian *Aufhebung*. Time is our misperception of this logico-metaphysical series. The theory makes intelligible, removes the contradiction in our evolutionary view of the universe and of ourselves especially, our imagining that a view seen as true could be determined by an ever-changing complex of material parts.

For McTaggart or Hegel materiality is delusive in a still more radical sense. It is a compound characteristic some of whose factors apply to nothing. E.g., nothing, on their view, is really extended.¹⁸

Not only can new forms of spirit evolve naturally beyond the human, such that we must cease to view human essence as defined by whatever of "body" or potency is to hand, speaking rather with Kant of "the rational creature", as H.P. Lovecraft in one of his tales spoke of "the old ones" in Antarctica, in appearance more like octopi yet spirit like ourselves. Spirit itself, also, ourselves, produces forms, is form of them all, in creative knowledge. Cloning, or Huxley's unhappy vision (it need not be¹⁹) in *Brave New World*, shows this possibility, as some think we may give life to computers or that, as "intentional systems", they are equivalently alive. Just as man has often been credited with a unique potentiality for self-

¹⁷ This is outlined in his *The Nature of Existence* (1927).

¹⁸ C. D. Broad: *The Mind and its Place in Nature*, RKP London, 1925, p. 625 (originally the Tarner Lectures delivered at Cambridge in 1923). McTaggart, who died in 1927, quixotically made Broad his literary executor. Broad returned the compliment with his three-volume *Examination of McTaggart's Philosophy* (CUP 1933 and 1938). Peter Geach is able to show (*Truth, Love and Immortality* (Hutchinson of London, 1979) how Broad multiply misrepresents or misunderstands McTaggart. The very title of his 1925 book exemplifies this, as it exemplifies the perspectival error formalised in Catherine Malabou's latest book, after *The Future of Hegel*. Mind (*Geist*) has and can have no place "in" nature, which is rather, along with "extension", mind's own self-alienation. There is nothing more fundamental for thought to think "with", not even "the so-called laws of Thought" of "the common logic" (Hegel, *Enc.* 162).

¹⁹ But for an equally unhappy vision of this eventuality, cloning, see the relevant novel by Ishiguro.

ablation or suicide, so he has also the potentiality, “obediential” or not, of self-transformation to “a new creature”, whether under surgical, psychical, directly spiritual or other auspices. In logico-metaphysical terms, spirit is anterior to as itself guaranteeing, as itself the form of, humanity, rather than that humanity should be the form of spirituality. This form, all the same, is more intrinsic to humanity than anything else, so that it may be spoken of as “closer to me than myself” (Augustine, *intimior me mihi*: This is the rationale behind Heidegger’s reservation in regard to Sartre’s thought expressed in the former’s *Letter on Humanism* (1947). It is also what is expressed by “belief in God”, in the primacy of Spirit, of Mind in Hegel’s interpretation. So, although we speak of “my mind” or of someone as “out of his mind”, yet mind is self as prior to all the forms of self-alienation, of which nature, inclusive of “human nature”, would be the first. Yet, just as Nature (“created nature”) is argued (by Hegel, for instance) one with God’s or Spirit’s self-alienation or self-expression (the Word), so it is, *a fortiori* even, with human nature in regard to the spirit “in man”. The differentiation is comparable, says Hegel, without denying the distinction of Trinitarian or other persons but in simple application of the logical moments he charts of self and other, to a play of love as “with itself”. Thus man remains himself and so remains man through all his or (it is the same) Spirit’s self-transformations, of which what is signified and/or effected by Christian baptism seems to remain the paradigm or “the new creation”²⁰.

Once maybe, to speak in temporal mode, there were “giants” on the earth, as there were Neanderthals or primates such as *homo erectus*, more spiritual or *geistig* than we had previously thought, while Rudolf Steiner argues for a palaeolithic race of clairvoyants. There may even be clairvoyant dogs, in a continuum with their unimaginably refined olfactory sense, or, why not, “selfish” genes, in the sense of partaking of self. It is thus explicit in McTaggart’s thought, always at bottom an interpreter of Hegel, that nothing exists that is not personal, bearing in mind though that this means in the end that dogs or genes, even they, are not as “immediately perceived”, an expression he finds coincident with being

²⁰ *The New Creation*: this is the title of what one might call the enlightened if short study by Herbert McCabe OP on the Christian sacraments, of which baptism is one, specifically. Sacramental theology is the branch of theology perhaps especially challenged to renewal by philosophy’s absolute idealism as by growth in consciousness, as of the proverbial mustard seed, generally. “Behold I make all things new”, all things, *in saecula saeculorum*. This means, however, that “the more they change the more they stay the same”, in accordance with Hegel’s logical analysis of sameness and difference in their mutual relation.

misperceived. The question of spirit, eternity, immortality, cannot be one of mere survival. One has to go over to it, get hold of it, now, in "the life that I live now". How we "think ourselves" is how we shall be. "Every soul gets what it expects" (Thérèse of Lisieux). Here, now, I shall not repose confidence in hands and feet, those necessarily posited filters of my essential or immediate experience. I shall "pass over" to new life, reconstruct, deconstruct. This can happen through art, or love, as well as through exposure to philosophy, my own or another's indifferently. Love is in fact such exposure, as Boethius dramatised philosophy to feminine form, following a Socratic precedent²¹ when *in extremis*.

So the statement that God became man, specifically, should rather or firstly be put, as it is in the Nicene Creed, as "He came down from heaven"²², signifying the absoluteness of the conscious subject as differentiated infinity. This, once again, has nothing to do with dualism. Rather, it is an absolute monism. The material world is misperception, not some evil reality. Thus to say with Hegel that the finite is evil is, necessarily, to be taken with his attendant claim that "there is evil in God", thus, inevitably, extending the sense of evil as, in a sense he specifies, "the same as good". He offers here, that is, a particular interpretation of the belief that God "created" the world in its finitude as good, specifying a meaning of that term as that the world created is not divorcible from the divine idea of it, since this includes the ideas of being or of existence, as our productions, as phenomena, are divorcible from our thoughts (ideas, also, as "ours", in that measure at least phenomenal) of them²³. "Idea" cannot be univocal here. Any divine idea is identical with divinity, *essentia divina*, infinity, God.²⁴ Nor do we know if there are divine ideas of those passing and potential "things" we have ideas of in distinction from

²¹ This may be referred, however, to the figure of Diotima in *The Symposium* or to the discussion of love in *Phaedrus* rather than to the *Phaedo*, though here Boethius' and Socrates' identity of personal situation is more nearly reflected.

²² *Descendit de caelis* (Creed), which is also, in the English phrase I cite, the title of a theological study by Charles Williams. Hence this is put separately and before *et incarnatus est de virgine Maria et homo factus est*.

²³ Thus in saying that "it is evident that it is this man who thinks" (my stress) Thomas Aquinas was referring to a phenomenon, that, in Hegelian terms, of the immediate, even if Hegel goes on to point out that such immediacy is itself mediated.. That is, he gives a differentiated account of the self-evident, not to be confused with the logically "analytic" expounded by Kant and others but rather as expressed, and further worked out, in his identification of the Outside with the Inside. "This man who thinks" is not what he calls the abstract (and "ruined") individual., is not "this man" thus taken.

²⁴ Aquinas: *Summa theol.* Ia 15.

divine ideas of us conscious subjects or spirits ourselves having or shaping those ideas.²⁵

In fact the creation relation is less like that of a house with the architect's conception (idea) of it than it is like that of a work (*opus*) of philosophy or science with its idea, with the thinker or even the word or utterance with the utterer. In a real sense we do not and cannot think before we speak, as if in one "time-line" Thus it is not the calligraphy or typescript, the material product, that constitutes Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, say, just as it is not his *Metaphysics* that "constitute" his metaphysics, whatever they finally were. Sartre went wrong here, when he would have asserted this, in not seeing that actual thinking (*theoria*) is (the highest) *praxis*, as Aristotle affirms elsewhere, and not its opposite. The question of style, again, has always been a vexed one. Does style add to the thought, or is the thought already in the style, the style present in the original thinking, the medium the message? Is it a medium at all in such cases or is the final category purely aesthetical, something like glory? It is a (glorious?) possibility for thought.

Need one assert a difference in art even? Is one's relation there to the bricks, to sounds and their notation, to colour and paint, singing and words, essentially different from the thinker's to those words that he "will" say, write or simply think. Are they not equally *signa formalia*, ciphers one looks right through? If one truly did that then one would no longer misperceive. All our thought, our making of judgments, belongs to our immersion in the phenomenal, our commitment, willy-nilly, to "objectification", the "tragedy of knowledge" which Berdyaev praises Kant for bringing to light?²⁶ Hence McTaggart, like St. Paul, concludes that in eternity we do not make judgments, that, as Hegel says, all judgments are false, makeshift composites for the ultimate unitive and reciprocal perception. "Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away"²⁷ and good riddance, it is implied.

Thus in philosophy we are concerned, as final focus, not with books but with ideas, with thought, as we are, indeed, if less clearly or less beyond dispute, in any poetry or *Tondichtung*, any painting (though abstractive reflection back upon the material used, as upon language, is never excluded). In so far though as we focus upon "the mind of the maker" what is made ceases to be objectified product and approaches more and more to self-epiphany, a concept even de-objectifying (but not reducing)

²⁵ See our "Divine Creation, Exemplarism and Divine Ideas", *The Downside Review*, No. 429, October 2004, pp. 273-289.

²⁶ N. Berdyaev, *Spirit and Reality*.

²⁷ *I Corinthians* 13.

revelation itself. What could God reveal but himself? What is creation but a first revelation, a first unveiling which is yet still a self-covering of the divine, of the Idea, with veils?²⁸ The same applies to the conception of the constitutive speaking or begetting of the Word, that God is in himself act, is act in itself, the latter in turn being itself, necessarily, as infinite, what, if anything, we would call God, i.e. if there were such absolutised act, necessarily. Substance, ultimately, is act and therefore not substance as we commonly conceive and “reify” it.²⁹ Creation, the scholastics said, adds nothing to God. For it is, as that implies, nothing added. Thus, whatever in me is presented as something added to or other than God is not my true self. I am God. That means, again, I am nothing. Generally, non-being serves as well as being for a first adumbration.³⁰

The theme of revelation. One has absolutised revelation as if to mean something coming from the absolute. But here it can only mean the absolute's coming itself, its revealing itself, and not some particular other thing. That would be further concealment, rather. But nor could it be an occasional event within the absolute's history or trajectory. The absolute or, therefore, anything counting as a revelation must itself be its revealing, that which is revealed, manifested. The revelation as accomplished or dead fact could not be what is thus absolute, since it is now as it were temporarily finished, finite. We are left rather with an absolute self-revealing, a self consisting in this very revealing. Thus it is not literally related to such utterance as its begetter. It is this relation of begetting itself as begotten or uttered. For since the revelation is whole, as absolute, its whole self is thus uttered, as it is, again, its whole reality to be making this utterance. It is act to the point of relation, since there is no distinct or other subject of this act.

The same applies to the uttered Word, ever a coming forth or a being begotten, as it were subsisting in this very relation. The perpetual movement or act implied is called Spirit, a name suggested by the wind, or a breathing, which cannot be except as it is in act and which can appear as having no subject. Spirit again is this very relation of exhalation, or of proceeding as *donum*, gift. Exhalation and procession are classically identified, though as species and genus, while begetting and being begotten make two persons, as parent and child, speaker and Word. Since all are spirit there is no need to distinguish within the final gift, a hint here

²⁸ *Psalms* 103,104.

²⁹ Cf. Hegel's criticisms of Spinoza on this point in the *Encyclopaedia*, esp. the footnote to §76.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 87.

of the finally non-enumerable character of relations which are persons. Thus, for instance, "You are all one person in Jesus Christ", said even though "all" names many, viz. all persons.

Where now is this absolute thought or word found unless in the thought, the mind, the spirit, of writer or reader here? Where would it be if thought apart from me, or you? It would be finite if cut off from me, which is contradictory, as it would if cut off from you, whom I hold within myself. Precisely this absolute, in fact, as free (*solutum*) from restriction, from bounds, in-finite, requires and makes it to be that we are all in one another, "members one of another". For each posits the absolute, of which there can only be one and who includes its beholders as each a moment, and more than a moment, in its forever and at all points entire manifestation. "He that has seen me has seen the Father." No doctrine concerning the privileges of this human speaker can reduce the force of the consideration as applied to each of us. "I and the Father are one." "The eye with which God sees me is the eye with which I see God", Eckhart comments.

That is, in order to be absolute or unbounded the infinite both includes and is included in and is ultimately one with consciousness. It is universal subject. It is I. I, then, am the universal of universals. In what state, then, does this dis-covering leave the I or self of unreflecting experience? Even if reason of necessity start here, as we started with a notion of revelation, reason owes it to itself, has within itself, to transform whatever starting-point is chosen for its reflection. But was it only in this sense that Hegel, say, assumed being, the category, to start his dialectic? He says, rather, that he chose Being "because it is the beginning". Yet he argues at length that Non-Being would serve equally well for the purpose.³¹ Why did he not begin, rather, with Category itself, the idea thereof? Because in doing so he would be granting that a category is something, as that something is, is being (as is also Becoming).

What we cannot begin without is Reason itself, as what is posited prior to any such dialectical beginning. Reason, Mind (*nous*), knows itself before and in knowing anything. It would be that into which being first falls (*cadit*), as Aquinas expressly says, in inversion, however. Still, if being falls first into mind then there seems to be a being before being, a non-falling being, though we must say too that mind itself falls, must fall, into mind, to be considered at all. So then there is first a non-considering mind, the Idea "before" it becomes a mere systematised notion, the method as very "form for the Idea" (*Enc.* 237: he does not say "of" but

³¹ *Ibid.*, *eodem loco*.

“for”: yet this is the translator Wallace’s nuance of the German *der Idee*, whether dative, genitive or at once both). In knowing Mind as absolute we do not know if it is one or many. It seems to be neither, as including the many minds, each of which, qua mind, has to be absolute, I. The solution is that Mind is necessarily differentiated, since it is real and everything real is individual, as opposed to merely abstracted universals. But as infinite it must then be infinitely differentiated. The Platonic “theory of forms” is only by Procrustean treated “fitted in” to the later controversy over universals. If the universal is a real individual it is no longer a universal in the abstract sense intended and which alone provokes the (insoluble) controversy.

It follows then that the threefold structure of any possible revelation as discerned here, viz. revealer, revealed and this Gift as proceeding, is found as occurring within Mind wherever it is thus found, always as differentiated. There is not a twofold mirroring structure, as between infinite and a contradictorily finite mind, but rather an identity, as there is, precisely as there is, between those three relational persons, if we may so denominate such relations. The denomination, indeed, makes of it an identity in difference. This is not a contradiction but names that which is best captured in terms such as love or harmony, or by the preposition “in” as used in mystical or prophetically doctrinal writings or, indeed, in the true poetry of such love. The “thoughts of one mind” are essentially different, differentiated; yet thought cannot do other than think itself. Thought is ever with itself, this being what it names.

Since the differentiation is absolute and infinite the differentiated must itself differentiate. This is the origin, the meaning, of time and space, both of which, therefore, are themselves without end and thus not empirical or finite, not Objects, though they are not themselves absolute either. They are therefore dialectically transient forms of Mind’s self-perception, to which it is thus the effort of all art, religion or philosophy to return them, to and in Mind or Spirit. Such “spiritualism” or idealism therefore is the very form of these three manifestations or revelations of Spirit, of nous. Thus when Thomas Aquinas denies that animals or plants have part in the resurrection, incidentally parrying an objection by saying that their lost beauty will be compensated for by “the beauty of the bodies of the redeemed”, he writes unknowingly, as it seems, from the viewpoint of an absolute idealism. A world that comes to be and passes away never actually IS or was, in comparison with eternity. In mentioning the bodies of those, and not merely “those”, who “sit with Christ in the heavenly places” he shows the constraint of a theologian assuming himself committed to a literal interpretation of the term “resurrection”, as many

still do not question that "revelation" must name a selection from the totality of historical events. What we should be literal about, however, is precisely idealism.

Human nature, not much to its credit, is more ready to believe that a system denies God, than that it denies the world. A denial of God seems so much more intelligible than a denial of the world.³²

Resurrection is a figurative name for a more perfect unity than that organic unity we experience, or more properly project as sign of it, as body. As such the faith in it is the faith that "all shall be well and all manner of thing", though Julian's "shall be" here is itself figure for the faith that all is well and that eternity and not time is truth.³³ This after all is the predominant sense of faith in the Gospels, mentioned in connection with moving mountains or walking on water (or rising from the dead), i.e. of understanding and therefore believing in the nothingness of corporeal or visible things in comparison with our own inwardness.

What is common to space and time is outsideness, *partes extra partes*, as before and after are behind and in front, the past being behind one while what comes after is yet ahead, or at least was once ahead. Spatial metaphors predominate. In fact they are never transcended, as when we speak of the specifically temporal "prior", or even "prior to", although we really say, i.e. mean, "more near than", prior being the comparative of *prope*. There is a condition of parts outside parts, moments outside moments, for with time motion comes in, although this is in reality inseparable from any such composition without identity, as allowing for decomposition. The very notions, that is to say, of parts and moments are tied to this analytical externality, specifically as denying identity. Thus a man will say he is a part or aspect of God, as if the deity were limited to such composition and faceting.

Religion however affirms, in the person of Paul the Apostle, that nature "groans and travails", awaiting "redemption" or the removal of its contradictions until, eternally, God shall be all in all. Thus the poet sees "the world in a grain of sand", "eternity in an hour". "He that sees me has seen the Father." Nor need the speaker there be taken as speaking exclusively of his self, when "transfigured" or not, as if he might not also say that what was done to anyone was done to him, as seeing anyone was seeing him or seeing him was seeing anyone, members one of another, in a common mind. That is, the saying is at any rate continuous with Eckhart's

³² *Ibid.* 50.

³³ Julian of Norwich: *Revelations of Divine Love* (fourteenth century).

insight: "Without me", meaning anyone, "God would not be" just as "Without God I would not be", common ground in both contexts. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus", the Mediator, we read in words of the Apostle himself become "all things to all men" in a double identification, which is not however a "double identity", as we loosely speak. For to each is said, first, "All things are yours" who, namely, are "all things to all men", "as having nothing yet having everything" in what is a dialectical and yet, or therefore, real equation, The dialectical, that is, is the mark of speculative knowing. It is a knowing what we are, in and as what we "shall be", in present thought. I mean the term of this dialectic, is needed for final truth, the logico-metaphysical truth of "realised end", where, in religious language, we "sit with Christ in the heavenly places", final truth, as against "misperception", such as the future tense merely represents. As yet we here, phenomenally as within the phenomenal, do not know our relation to that eternal we, that is to say Reason, is here identifying, without taking heed of the merely immediate and frequently illusory. "How can the gods see us face to face until we have faces?" Until, rather, we unveil or eternally reveal who or whatever we are, or are thus unveiled and revealed indifferently. Not, that is to say, that the revelation "has already occurred", identified as error by the Apostle, but that it is the eternal truth, it being "our affair" (Hegel) to get beyond finite or "natural" perception, what is done first, Hegel points out, and in "faith" by everyone, at whatever cultural stage, in worship or liturgy, that divine service, *Gottesdienst*, of which, he claims, philosophy is the perfect form, thus far identifying it with what is called contemplation in mystical or "ascetical" theology. One finds at least discreet approach to this identification frequently in Thomas Aquinas or, less formally, in Augustine, while the keeping separate of the two is ruinous for personal integrity or vitality. It is, unfortunately, what lies behind the well-meant talk of philosophers as an extinct class or of philosophy as, impossibly, the servant of "sacred philosophy". Philosophy is itself *Gottesdienst* or it is nothing, a sham. Thus is the Temple veil ripped in two, not as being replaced by another religion merely, but as fulfilment in transcendence (*Aufhebung*) of religious spirituality as such., as it is, a fortiori, of dramatic or other art. That is the vision. It brooks no alternative, assuming them all, rather.

As spirit and therefore free I need no *praemotio physica*. From this it follows that I was never born, also that all knowledge is remembering, though what is merely forgotten continues known in some way. This placing of transcendence within self alone does justice to both, by identifying them. Thus it is that "God has spoken only one Word" (John of

the Cross). Viewed thus we may see atheism as a species of theism or, in varied perspective, vice versa. "I and the Father are one", why ask that he be shown? We have, simply, "one Lord, one faith, one God and father of all, who is above all and in all." Faith, now, is this life-giving awareness and acknowledgement of our dignity, the gold to which our formulations are as silver merely. *Cor ad cor loquitur*. Only thus is that real freedom asserted which a predominantly Jesuit faction long ago tried impotently³⁴ to preserve in separation, rather than as distinction, within the Dominican logic of omniscient omnipotence. There is indeed no surprising the absolute and the ends of "the cunning of Reason" are indeed eternally achieved. Thus we ourselves, precisely as rational, of reason, are free, though living under the illusion, itself part of the illusion of living itself, of a "not yet". The faith that moves mountains is I myself, subjectivity fully realised, itself identical with any *praemotio physica*. The *prae* is itself a spatio-temporal picture of the identity, eliciting reaction. Scripture, for its part, says as much again and again, while true philosophy, inclusive of the role of scepticism Humean or classical, has taken the hint in progressive assimilation.

Thus the second creation, postulated as Christianity, where that faith is known and understood, is precisely this interiorisation. Reality, it is henceforth understood, is not merely a community but a communion, a communing, of spirits, of Spirit. In this communing there is adoration of the infinite, the totality of communion in each one and for each one. This adoration, though not projected externally, is not thereby reflexive upon self. It is rather expressive of what we might call the liturgical community, again, understanding liturgy in the widest sense of service and building-up, through song and poetry in and from the heart, principally, or in educating of children, in battling to promote the good, to intensify the communing so as to manifest its actual infinitude. Even in liturgy as we know it the psalmody is nine tenths a pure expression of this *joie de vivre*, this effort of necessary virtue and, just in that, an adoration of one's own transcendent reality, *intimior me mihi*.

Creation then is nothing other than that self-revelation which is Spirit's essence, which is Spirit. It is Spirit's constitutive self-differentiation in unity. Nothing there is but itself, since each has and is, focally, the unity of

³⁴ Not quite impotently, since immediately they got the Pope of the day (1607) to put a stop to the controversy without himself pronouncing either way. It was a new Tordesillas, dividing this time the world of the spirit in finite delegation. Philosophy can have none of it, prepared rather to affirm both sides of such apparent contradictions, as necessity is finally, or as "unveiled or realised", freedom (Hegel: *Enc.* 157).

all. Each then is absolute end, or person. Thus the only real tree is a tree identical with the beholder, at least as a sign he uses. On any account there are difficulties and we must hold fast to ground previously gained, in reason as in belief.

Infinitely differentiated infinite Spirit, our name for such co-inherence³⁵, extends as principle into each or any of the differentiations, without end or finite sum. Here too Mind modulates infinitely, thus superseding the abstract principle of substance in absolute subjectivity in difference. Thus it can be said that "my thoughts are not your thoughts", both of the absolute and of the unity in respect of individuals as of one such in regard to another, though there is in fact no difference, since each is in all and all in each. The unity surpasses that of an organic body and is not, in final truth, beyond ideal figure as corpus mysticum, to be represented by it. What would be "head", for example, is the leading principle of an absolute or infinite unity of all in each one, as in a creature "full of eyes", one might rather imagine.

Identity of being and essence is often represented as an absolute simplicity and this need not be false, provided absolute simplicity be not mistaken for an abstract simplicity, which is a merely finite conception of our understanding. Thus the essential being thus found to be necessary from within its inmost essence is, it is with reason insisted upon, also an identifiable number of personal "processions" (proceedings, one might rather translate). This, however, is to give concrete content, which is the reverse of any abstractive procedure. Only the concrete universal, thereby also individual, is real.

Take away the abstraction, however, and any of Spirit's differentiations, any spirit indeed, is equally necessary. Its being, that is, is not separable from its essence. We avoid the term "existence", both as being simply lifted unpurged from daily discourse and as etymologically suggesting origin from another. For nothing is darker and more paradoxical than any idea of another's giving rise to subjectivity as such. For then what is my own would not be my own. We have rather to conceive such an originating absolute as closer to and more identified with the subject than is any empirical self, the reality of which, indeed, it is possible to doubt. "A person is a person through persons" (Bantu proverb), be he divine or human. Incarnation, however, means the divine is human. Since by "human", however, we name not a biological category from the shifting world of sense but instantiation of Reason rather, it follows that all

³⁵ This term, as far as I know, was first "thematised", in the sense of being used to name a definite doctrine, in the theological writings of Charles Williams, such as *He Came down from Heaven*, *The Descent of the Dove* or *The Figure of Beatrice*.

appearance of a dualism, as between creator and created, is removed and this without prejudice to the doctrine of creation as such!

For this in fact is the meaning of creation "out of nothing", the only possible creation as distinct from work of a mere "demiurge". We are thoughts or "ideas" of one mind and of one another's minds, each such thought or intention utterly and completely fulfilled as in its intentional essence, being one with the thinker, with Spirit. This is the rule of absolute subjectivity, transcending substance, the mere memory of which is retained in such terms as "coinherence" or "relation", as "outside" and "inside".

The Trinitarian processions, for example, were historically denominated as necessary or *ad intra*, while the procession of creation was judged contingent or *ad extra*. A true instinct associated both processes under one term, with the corollary that what proceeds outwards does so in order to return within, such a *reditus* being in fact more of an eternal constant than it is historical. There is an unmistakable merging of the two conceptions in one reality, just as the Trinity itself, called economic, is first manifested for us in a particular event or action, rather, along with its deliberate finality, a procession of Spirit, *cum filio ad patrem*. The Trinity, however, as we said above of it as absolute, is nothing other than this manifesting of "itself", in substance-transcending subjecthood.

Thus creation, precisely as sovereignly free, is absolutely necessary (necessary to the Absolute) and thus adds nothing to the original principle of Manifestation. What is called the second creation is, rather, clarification, we might say glorification, of creation's unitary idea. Incarnation, that is, is necessary not precisely as a purpose at once historical and divine, even a purpose irrespective of notions of a human fall from grace. It is, rather, the full revelation of Spirit, God with us, Emmanuel. The being with us is more fundamental precisely to it and despite the etymology, of "incarnation", than any taking of "flesh". The latter presumes a dualist model of "the rational creature" or, rather, of Mind's inherent differentiations. Flesh, properly understood, names our dreamlike sublunary life and nothing else. It is in this sense that "all flesh is as grass". Thus to eat the flesh of the Son of Man is to share his life, beliefs, outlook, loves, as it is to share one another's, all sons of men, and any sacramental usage should be of a piece with that. Unity, beyond union, is the true or final reality. Or, again, mind is not in nature. Nature is in mind and nowhere else. This of itself means that "in" is now spatial metaphor for identity.

Affirmation of ecumenical principles is inseparable from this mystical terminus since it interprets it. Philosophy, that is to say, is true as a whole

and its exemplifications in time, under a plurality of words and signs, are just so many imperfect representations expressive of love for this eternal sophia. Love, after all, is the unitive principle and best name, beyond the last of the categories, for what is absolute.

Philosophy indeed, though often called mysticism, at its most "mystical" is but sober accomplishment of the mysteries of religion. These mysteries should not be absolutised, since in their mysteriousness they are rather indices of the imperfection of religion as a form of spiritual apprehension, destined to be fulfilled in philosophy, the perfect form, where there will be "light and no darkness at all". Thus we should understand the "consolation of philosophy", proclaimed by a Christian martyr *in extremis*.³⁶

Nothing essential to Christianity distinguishes it as religion over against philosophy. As absolute it would rather transcend any such finite classification. It transcends religion as being, in respect to cognition, an inherently imperfect form. Not that Christianity itself is merely gnosis. This is the meaning of the "foolishness" of the Cross, of love, which nonetheless makes all things one or breaks down "walls of separation", the supreme task of all philosophy as geared towards music or harmony. Christianity, we might say, thus ideally understood, is love as fulfilling knowledge, with its dualism of theory and practice, of object and subject, and hence philosophy itself. In this sense the answer to some Greek visitors, attributed to Jesus when about to die, would itself be the highest philosophy and no "talking in riddles". The seed, namely, must either stay alone or fall into the ground and die, thus bringing forth much fruit.

So Christianity can as well be presented as philosophy as it can as religion. Thus Justin Martyr or a Clement of Alexandria might present it while Porphyry had written of the Jews as "a nation of philosophers". As to that, if revelation be understood, thematised, in the way we have done here then a mutual identification of prophets and philosophers comes into view, as we have already identified the latter with "mystics". What distinguishes itself from both is rather theology in the restricted or sacral sense it acquired after the Patristic age and which it is now losing. It is no longer distinguishable from philosophy of religion or from a religious or "mystical" philosophy in general, since we are claiming philosophy to be the true wisdom of the infinite, declaring anything finite to be false or *unwahr* (Hegel).

³⁶ The point would stand independently of the apparent identity of Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius with the San Severino still venerated around Mantua, the place of Boethius' execution.

In fact the restrictiveness of such theology is, more fundamentally than its sacrality, its rationalist tendency, especially in the modern period, against which Henri de Lubac's work³⁷ was largely a protest, against its thinking within the confines of *Verstand* rather than *Vernunft*. Thus to Hegel in his day it could seem that theologians were only interested in establishing what had been said at this or that Council and not at all in the truth of matters. Conversely, the quality of sacrality can be extended to philosophy in general, while both philosophy and religion (theology) have historical relations, willy-nilly, to magic and "theurgy", as, still more strikingly, does natural science.

No essential cleavage then lies between the prophetic religions and the earlier or later religious philosophies of East or West. It is but natural that mankind, along with its teachers, show more interest at first in conclusions of vital concern than in the subterranean premises and processes giving rise to the fructiferous eruptions of the former upon the stage of history. It would be, for example, a salutary work to go through the canonical Gospels listing, ordering and meditating upon the copious instances of reasoning, explicit or implicit, analysis or synthesis, *Verstand* or *Vernunft*, employed by their Messianic protagonist. Reasoning (by analogy) is found, we noted, even in his only apparent refusal to discuss with those Greeks who "would see" him. His answer shows forth a correction, a "crucial" refinement, of their distinction between theory and practice, such as comes to be more fully and explicitly worked out and accomplished, via thesis and antithesis, in later philosophies. Thus too did Plato and others accomplish the life and utterances (*voces*) of Socrates, their originary instigator as philosophers, whatever we say of the pre-Socratic thinkers. Our schema here reflects that of the originating prophetic and wisdom literature and later philosophy with Christ as hinge "fulfilling the Scriptures". So the Socratic mediation of philosophy figures the absolute mediation posited of Christ as such, as "the one" that is to come or "was to be" (Aristotle's term for the later "essence"), the necessary Mediator, Hegel asserts: *Ausser dieser Unmittelbarkeit ist also die Vermittlung der Vorstellung notwendig.*

This self-consciousness does not therefore really die, as the particular person is pictorially imagined to have really died; its particularity expires in its universality, i.e. in its knowledge, which is essential Being reconciling itself with itself... When the death of the mediator is grasped by the self, this means the sublation of his factuality, of his particular independent existence; this particular existence has become universal self-

³⁷ See Henri de Lubac: *Le catholicisme*, Paris 1947 (fourth edition).

consciousness... On the other side, the universal, just because of this, is self-consciousness, and the pure or non-actual Spirit of bare thought has become actual... what dies is... the abstraction of the Divine Being.³⁸

For both Socrates (abstracting now from the pre-Socratic thinkers) and Jesus came of a long line of prophets and wonder-workers or, in other cultures, medicine-men, shamans, those who, as also the founders and pillars of the poetic arts, the minstrels, do not write down as if to tie the Spirit, blowing where it will. It blows away the sand where such writing may take root for a shorter or longer time. Even the stone tablets of the Law are now lost while in the age of computers recorded data get erased more rapidly than in the age of printing they were ever duplicated. More positively, electronic transmission and gradual approximation of technical extensions of intelligence to the natural, until they become indistinguishable and all is revealed as known to all, is now daily experience. Barriers of time and space are yielding progressively, with or without final "catastrophe", to an ever-present eternity. This is already daily experience, daily celebrated and historically prepared liturgically under the most simple human actions. Become what you are, this paradoxical watchword of certain Thomists in particular has many applications, though all are related and thus one.

It is wrong then to take the doctrine of creation as implying or requiring refusal of idealism. The opposite is the case, this being the force of the qualification, "out of nothing". The analogy of any and every divine name implies the same. As images and icons we are not ourselves in the absolute and deepest sense, but have our being in another. This other is represented abstractly as otherness as such. We have however identified it with self-manifestation so that taken concretely it might be conceived as the supra-organic unity of all rational subjectivity, by which I mean that the rational is the subjective and vice versa. We have left behind both substance and object as finite categories while, as for being, the supra-categorical notion which is alone real because infinite or unbounded, as "at home" with itself

³⁸ *The Phenomenology of Mind*, tr. Baillie, p. 781. I add that nothing forbids application of this to self-consciousness generally or as found in anyone as thus represented to self-consciousness. Thus far this view coincides with or even illuminates the Buddhist "No birth no death".. The particularity of mediatorship is thus itself universalised, as by Hegelian logic it should be. Each dies for all, the bell "tolls for thee". History pictures the Concept and this is the (absolute) necessity of the contingent, of the "picture-idea". God perishes, dies, but only as man, his identical counterpart does, in the self-consciousness of the Idea, which, in threefold syllogism, is the true God, is "everything".

everywhere, has been found wider than merely immediate existence. Thinking, as was realised independently of idealism, has no empirical nature, since in this way it transcends the phenomenal (and only thus can "know the natures of all bodies"). And yet it is never impersonal. "It is evident that it is this man (or woman or spirit generally) who thinks." So much is this so, however, that where two or three are perceived as acting or thinking together, there am I in the midst of those perceived, as concretely conscious subject.³⁹ A unity of being ever with all is perceived as definitive of the individual concrete subject. And this we may call God.

When God is thought of as transcending this unity in what is represented as a quasi-spatial or temporal infinity, a sea in which the circumscribed islet of creation is arbitrarily and disharmoniously set down, then it is a finite notion of infinity with which we are perplexing ourselves. When creation, the creating, is represented as beginning, as if time itself might temporally begin, what is meant rather is the principle of creation. *In principio*, this first phrase of the Bible is later used, as first phrase of a Gospel, for the Word's being, its being with God and indeed being God, the Word "through whom all things were made". As "word" a dynamic principle, a being spoken, is named, utterance in act as one with its very conceiving, ever new. Augustine came close to this in referring the first phrase of *Genesis* to the angelic creation as super-temporal. God, it was later taught, is necessarily identical "in essence" with any and every one of his conceptions, ideas thus themselves divine and not merely ideas of a divine thinker.⁴⁰ God is thus the full reality, the unity of persons, it being persons alone who resist a quasi-logical swallowing-up within infinite substance. This mutual coinherence stands though as an ideal conception. We cannot without more ado identify our empirical selves with the necessarily indwelling persons. The apparent reality of death bids us pause if nothing else does. As scripture has it, "We know what we are but we do not know what we shall be."⁴¹ We can, however, also question how far we know what we are. We have already asserted here that we, as subjects, cannot have been born and do not die. Nor do we mean by this to give new or refined form to the old dualisms and their impotent oppositions.

McTaggart claims, stresses, that the system of reality, this unity of all with all is for the individual but that the individual is not for this unity it has to the point of identity with it within itself. One almost catches a

³⁹ I permit myself to recall obliquely here the evangelical assertion here as concluding to the same.

⁴⁰ Cf. Aquinas, *Summa theol.* Ia 15, 1 *ad 3um*: *idea in Deo nihil est aliud quam Dei essentia.*

⁴¹ *I John*, 3.

political echo here. It also shows how, for him, traditional or "religious" ideas of God are idolatrous. This leads him so to identify the self, as subject, with the primal necessity and origin that ideas of sacrificial self-offering to it, as distinct from self-offering to one another, becomes unintelligible and erroneous, or so one might think. In reality, though, the notion of sacrifice is on this system found to merge completely with that of adoration. This, however, is and was always the consummate theology of sacrifice, as found in the expression "the sacrifice of praise", used of the Eucharist. This is often unthinkingly seen as contrasted with the "bloody" sacrifice of the Cross, which it is seen as re-presenting, even to the point of making all generations mystically present at this proto-sacrifice.

Blood, though, has not much to do with it except as a religious figure and the sacrifice is one, focus it how we will. The one closer to us than we are to ourselves, as subject or subjects respectively, is each one's deepest subjectivity, is that one's true self and not alien or other. Thinking, philosophy, bids us give up what we had imagined as self, in what is thus sacrifice or worship, höchste Gottesdienst, when, namely, the subject has "understood this place, appointed for my second race".⁴² If we nonetheless distinguish philosophy from thinking then the former is second only in the sense that it is not primary, not primal reality. Taken as such it would be illusory, as is the abstracted body taken out of relation to Spirit. For what in Spirit is ours or mine is not to be laid hold of. Or, we can say that this "not" is the genuine or absolutely first philosophy, in the negative freedom of the Idea, called characteristically prayer, such that "all things are yours". Greek *theoria*, thus, is translatable indifferently, depending on context, as either study or contemplation, while the same applies to the Latin *studium* (which can also mean zeal. For when the text above adds "and you are God's" this is not to be taken merely as referring to a further sacrifice which we must make or even have made, in accepting such a destiny, but to the inmost reality of each as one with Spirit. One cannot cut off, without intellectual damage, that is to say, this moment, of prayer, where reason and praxis are one, however this term be understood, expressed or caught in ancient psalmody or later liturgical poetry: "Be still, and know that I am God". This is the truth, obliquely expressed in saying that philosophy is the handmaid (*ancilla*) of theology, a phrase open to "one-sided" misuse, to use Hegel's stock-term. Rather, as itself theology, philosophy is the handmaid of actual contact or contemplation. "What the spiritual man desires is contact."⁴³ This actual philosophy or

⁴² Cf. Henry Vaughan's deeply Platonic poem, "The Retreat".

⁴³ I take this saying from a collection of address by an unnamed Carthusian abbot collected in *They Speak by Silences*, DLT, London, c.1960

philosophy "in act", though, Hegel shows, given that any text is phenomenal only, one with negative theology, as *theoria* is denominated "highest praxis" by Aristotle. *Theologia negativa*, in fact, is an ancient name for contemplative prayer itself, whether or not this is correctly called experience, as Hegel makes very clear⁴⁴. This means that for us, in our own final vision of things, time, space, matter and body itself are all false conceptions. Aquinas had already said that "body" is regarded differently in logic from how it is viewed in metaphysics. The latter⁴⁵ dispenses completely with the idea of man as a composite (or with the composite man). "The last man became a living spirit." The earthen vessel forms no part of the treasure, being needed for its utterance and manifestation merely, a text that is wholly intentional, sign through and through, *signum formale* indeed.

The deeper truth, then, the "naked" truth, is not that the "beginning" unfolded in the "prologue" to the Fourth Gospel is a revision or remedy contingently imposed upon the standard version of *Genesis*. It is the latter's deeper penetration and thus its accomplishment. "Through him all things were made and without him was not anything that was made." This "through" would explain the "circumincessory" or Trinitarian sense, reflected in Hegel's texts, in which God creates, as a mere maker does not do, out of nothing. *Ex nihilo nihil fit*. This is the "dust and ashes" of the mystics, Isaiah's drop of water on the rim of the bucket, though this is all still a religious and figurative clothing to things. I mean, the Latin phrase says, read in context, that creation proper, abstracted from creator, is nothing. Creation is a "coming to self", as Hegel puts it. This inability to admit the nothingness of creation does not do the human race much credit, Hegel remarks, since it is here that knowledge of God, the Absolute, begins, only called "dark" by those taking the analytic understanding (*Verstand*) as proper to all situations. "Be still and know that I am God", am "light and no darkness at all". Scripture then calls it knowing (*Vernunft*) and not "unknowing". Meditation upon our subjectivity can and should unlock this truth and thus resolve the contradictoriness of two approaches, of thesis and antithesis.

It is in this sense also that the Fourth Gospel is an "answer" to the text of *Ecclesiastes* or "Book of the Preacher". Not as if it invalidates the earlier composition, but as completing and, again, accomplishing it, the truth of its motto that "vanity of vanities, all is vanity", all, namely, apart

⁴⁴ See, just for example, *The Phenomenology of Mind* (tr. Baillie), p. 777: "The difficulty people find..."

⁴⁵ Book VII of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is the stock text here, as passing from the duo of form and matter to that of act and potentiality to this act.

from the Absolute Idea, the "bread of life", in which life and logic terminate, the Word which is as honey while consumed (Ezekiel), such that "he that eats me shall live because of me". This though is life in a transposed sense of the term, not as that "life which is no life at all" (Teresa of Avila), such that "I live and yet not I" (Paul of Tarsus).

So in both cases the foundation or beginning of reality is also the beginning of a text. The concept of revelation, manifestation, is inseparable from that of sign. So the Word that "was", in the later text, though "made flesh" or, rather, just because of that, is spoken of, speaks rather, as one who is, "before" anything that "was". We are not primarily, in our sophia that is to say, concerned with any transient situation represented here by narrative or, again, religious convention. The author is prophet and philosopher and to be respected as such and as more than such. Ultimately he is Spirit, as is anyone who ever would thus express himself, saying "Know the Lord", as Jeremiah envisages that all will eventually say and therefore, paradoxically, not need to say. Here though such a knower knows himself as part of that knowledge, knows that everyone "born of the Spirit" thus knows absolutely, knowing himself in what is thus communicated to him or her by another. "He that eats me shall live because of me".

"Behold I make all things new." This is the true meaning of time, a perpetual and hence eternal birth. Teilhard de Chardin, a would-be philosophical realist despite all, speaks of nature as "this primitive substrate of the Spirit", not even hyle, matter, but a "shadow" of being, a "searching" even. One thinks, conversely, of Boehme speaking of God "before" creation as a "ray" of pure freedom. Teilhard speaks of the Negative, beneath this mere "form" of reality as a pure multiplicity, or the pure multiple as such, as "essentially a potency", the "initial subject of creation". This is as Thomist as it is Hegelian. The pure nothing does not exist, it is an abstract fiction, an "idea destructive of itself", a pseudo-idea, just a word. Here Bergson, who speaks thus, seems to answer or dissipate Heidegger's famous question in advance. The true name of nothing, Teilhard would urge, is the pure multiple, itself not a being but a call to being, inchoative, in contrast to The Creative Union he wrote of in 1918 and later. This is supposed to replace or improve upon the Greek idea, contradictory as it is, of a pre-existing "unformed" matter. Yet we had beforehand the doctrine of the divine thoughts and of God himself, in whom we "live and move and have our being", apostolic mirror image of a falsely inverted pantheism.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ See *Acts of the Apostles* 17, 28.

This insight regarding the idea of the pure nothing, its own abstract nothingness namely, has to be extended to that of the finitude and contingency of the self as subject. There is no world without me and subjectivity is not to be objectivised if we wish still to talk about it, to stick to the point. Thus I am not that person born at such and such a time, of such and such parents, having just these genes, since another would do as well. I though am myself and it is I alone who think the world I know, not some world as I know it but the world I know.

I place, as does anyone, all times in an essential relation, to (my) self or to all of us present now, which I call past. What they are related to, viz. myself, I call present. Converting this to "presence", however, as of some person, is already objectification, a placing of a distance. I imagine a future (*ens rationis*) as a time that is neither past nor present. The dream haunts me merely except in the case that I form, in practical cognition, an end or purpose. This, though, as end, is present, is I.

We commonly, or as a group, relate times (though this is secondary, a McTaggartian "B-series") to some past event, which just means past-for-us. Hence this "series" is secondary. There is then the before and after that event, which is wholly different from past and future. There are no past pasts, that is to say, but what is before Christ (B.C.), say, is simply before, as it were on a spatial series, and not past with respect to something other than myself, some postulated event, itself only past with respect to me.

This shows that any and every event is a function, a differentiation, of me, of now, as is all we call memory. Knowledge then is memory, as Plato saw, but memory is creative. How could it not be, if any I is a universe, if, as we have said, I am all, the universe? Thus Yahweh can say, "I will not remember their sins any more." These scarlet monstrosities themselves, that means, will be "as white as snow", somewhat like the glorified wounds of Christ in the Apocalypse, or the forgotten pains of childbirth. This reversal of our illusions (the only possible answer to Ivan Karamazov's objections to universal beatitude in Dostoyevsky's novel) first comes to expression, in our part of the world, in the pages of this Fourth Gospel, midway between Plato and Augustine. There it, such a consciousness, is narrated of one protagonist in the form of an exclusion of others. This is correct, since, we have said, the I is necessarily, always and everywhere, the whole world. Thus before Abraham was I am and I saw (but perhaps it should rather be "see") Satan falling from heaven. For that speaker Satan does thus fall, such as might be seen, while for us he probably does not or is not there at all. This illustrates and reinforces the dependence of any possible world upon me, the impossibility of objectifying or abstracting the notion. What we see as the world is rather

the reflection, the projection, of the circumincessory union in identity of each with all, of all with each, in mutual perception.

A "theology" was worked out, a Christology rather, of that proto-person, of his divine and human knowledge and their relation. This was but the beginning of understanding, since, likewise, identity with any other was asserted (Son of Man), and relations of unitive love between human beings were grasped in terms of identity. "You are all members one of another", all, "I in you (or them) and you in me". The you or the they were understood, and came to understand themselves, as favoured remnant or as sacrament standing for a renewed or finally self-understood spiritual community, not a mere inter-subjective community. This latter is a contradiction. Each subject, rather, is or has within himself the whole and is thus creative of all the rest. We beget one another and therefore are one another, as creatures "full of eyes". The eye with which I see you, or them, or him or her, or God, is the eye with which that other sees me. Eckhart's insight, like the credal formulations, applies still.

The idea of community, though, presupposes that we know who is who, as is not really the case here. We have understood the negative insight of Hume concerning the self, but now lifted away from a merely rationalist conceptual juggling, as one once had thought it. This way of understanding, and hence dismissing, early modern philosophy is seen more and more to have been defective. The insight helps us the better to situate Nietzsche's vision, in the later "romantic" period, of an Eternal Return, as also to appreciate the point of groping hypotheses of reincarnation. We do not know who is who, who is not who, since self itself is seen to be a paradoxical notion, due for supersession we might think, along with that continuity within a limit that we imagine for it. "Who art thou, Lord?" they asked long ago, receiving as final outcome the answer that what is done to anyone is done to me, as "in the midst of" any group. For any group, we may ultimately say, is gathered "in my name". This is the principle of ecumenism. Or, as Aquinas put it, the subject, as *ens*, is what is good, while *malum est semper in subjecto*. So don't finally judge, don't separate.

The ego, insisted Freud, is bodily, not then thinking that the latter, body, might be mere projection, a mere sign or word for self as relating to and indeed identifying with others. This is submersion, typically sexual and yet erotic, of Eros, as viewed through the body. It is just in sex, that is, that the body gives way, stands outside itself, becomes language and so Spirit, which is in its notion the identifying or mutual annihilation, hence death, of self and other. Spirit is the death of life, life as paradoxical and finite as self, and rising to new life, as we must still call it, "in the Spirit",

trans-organic or subjectual, "whether we live or die", i.e. however we choose to speak of it.

The existential problem of whom we are to thank might now seem exaggerated. This is not so, however, and thanksgiving itself, as much as revelation, has still to be rendered transparent in thematisation. The key, again, is self-transcendence.

*

In a certain number of cases (Mary's virginity, Christ's material resurrection, Ascension, etc.) one has the impression that the evangelical miracles translate into tangible form (after the manner of Genesis) that which is "unrepresentable" in such profound happenings as the immersion of the Word in the human phylum or the passage of Christ from his individual human state to his "cosmic" state as the centre of Evolution. Not just symbols: but the expression in an image of something inexpressible...⁴⁷

Earlier, however, we had noted a connection between representation of miracles, the inner life of faith and absolute idealism. Where so much, anyhow, is conceded an essential connection comes into view between this identification, Apostolic though it is, of Jesus and cosmic Christ or Word, and recognition of him, on ascending scale, through succeeding ages. Only so is he manifested as essential manifestation. A Messiah who disappeared at death or shortly thereafter would be as false a messiah as the escaped lunatic in a Fernandel comedy who had one aged lady as sole disciple. This means, in turn, that those confessing the name of Christ, understanding themselves as within that tradition to the point of being his "body", must be distinguishable in the world through their teaching and practice and, in a measure, the latter's success among a goodly proportion of at least the best minds and hearts. Christianity, that is, is ever aristocratic, as aiming professedly at the best and highest. "We are allowed to save whoever strives", say Goethe's angels in *Faust*, even if, as he himself can seem to suggest, those highest striving aim at ceasing from striving.

The confidence that this recognition will be accorded, this growth occur, is the principle of faith, or of faith in such faith, itself "overcoming the world". Its getting off the ground, in its milieu of occurrence, one shaped by traditions of prophecy, seems inseparable from identification of one as sent, to the point of sending himself. Again though, whatever the

⁴⁷ Teilhard de Chardin, *Oeuvres X*, Paris, Ed. du Seuil, p. 190 (my translation).

toll of miracles, this identification can only be concrete an a, for us at least, post factum sense. This was to be (like Aristotelian essence) the one who would change the world, in a direction identified, by the author of the *Letter to the Ephesians* and elsewhere, or by Hegel latterly, as one of freedom. That the men of that time, thinking in terms of overt, quasi-magical divine interventions, could spring from their hopes, as oppressed people, to their certainty, this is he, prepared the way, by "the cunning of Reason"⁴⁸, to the surer judgement, "This was he", mirrored by a Roman soldier's utterance, we are told, at the very moment of his death and upon the manner of it, "Truly this was a (or the) son of God."

The Teilhardian axis of creation and/or cosmos, that is, has first of all to be an historical axis. We, however, have placed that axis in subjectivity, one with the subject wherever found, be he one of Hume's Anatolian clowns or Hume himself or some other thinking person.

One may talk of *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*⁴⁹. One must go on, however, from the "other sheep not of this fold" to other Christs, each one, ultimately, an *alter Christus*, which yet are one, as we are all "members one of another" in a unity preserving and not submerging self since it is one with it. According to Teilhard Christianity and, one must add, the philosophy (not "Christian philosophy") to which it has given birth uniquely, or which it has revealed, unveiled, facilitates that which we all desire:

Uniquely... Christianity saves, while respecting the rights of our thinking, the essential aspiration of all mysticism: to unite oneself (i.e. to become the Other) while remaining oneself.⁵⁰

It is, in Hegel's phrase, the absolute religion and so, *ipso facto*, a passing over into philosophy. "Everything perfect of its kind must transcend its kind and become something different, something incomparable."⁵¹ This is the way to interpret positively what is seen as a decline of religion in the more civilised, i.e. literate and informed, areas, possessed of a more

⁴⁸ One cannot assume that the capital letter of Hegel's German plays only a conventional linguistic role here.

⁴⁹ Raymond Panikkar, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, Darton, Longman & Todd, London 1964 (1968).

⁵⁰ Teilhard de Chardin, *Ibid.* IV 139.

⁵¹ Ottilie, in Goethe's speculative novel: *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* II, ix (English, *Elective Affinities*). Thus also not all knowledge of the Absolute is "absolute knowledge" and so far as it is so it passes over into Love, which leaves the intrinsic dualism of any knowledge behind, knowing "as I am known".

humane ethos generally. This in fact is a way of viewing Good Friday, to speak liturgically, the death of the seed already mentioned here, which just thereby in no sense abides alone but bears much fruit and even multiplies itself, seeding more seeds for dying. Again, though, it is in the strength of those that are to come, themselves raised on his strength, that the proto-seed dies in full strength of accomplishment, as if seeing, by a certitude transcending faith, all souls ranged around Golgotha as around a holy table, all seeing him and one another as he sees all. "Greater things shall you do than I have done."

What then is this cunning of reason? Is there a Providence providing for us beyond our ken or do we thus provide for ourselves beyond conscious knowledge? Well, I would say, on the basis of considerations adduced here, that it comes to the same thing. Supposing intrinsic indeterminacy of self the question itself falls away. "God helps those who helps themselves", the proverb, is thus not so much a restriction as a definition. The same applies to saying that one who loves God must be one who loves his brother "as well" or to asking how one who hates his brother can be one who loves God. It is precisely here, namely, in the conscious other, that both he and self are found.

The resurrection, then, is properly demythologised so as not to mean simply an eternalisation of these arms and legs, as Teilhard has it. One can see this already in Aquinas's teaching, to whatever degree one "spiritualises" its form, that animals and plants are not resurrected. The beautiful "bodies of the redeemed" are not therefore bodies as a naturalist might mean, or a logician, to make the contrast Aquinas himself makes. I, who am subject, and my body are one. Yet if we insist at all upon the individual in abstraction from the universal, the true Body, we fall short. We do not thereby have to deny that we become "more ourselves" in eternity, but we do not know what that self is, though we know it will be universalised. "All things are yours." The "principle of personality is universality" and this follows from recognising first the "Son of Man", historically, and then "man as man... to be of infinite worth" and, Hegel adds, speaking against slavery, "to have infinite rights".⁵²

There is after all something disproportionate in the picture of the eternally resurrected each eternally confined to being from the little Hertfordshire marketing town, the Norwegian fishing village or Tonga. Rather say that each has been or is present at all times. Our knowledge of (some of) these is our initial way of re-membering them as participation in

⁵² Hegel: *Enc.* 163, subtext. "Every function and 'moment' of the notion is itself the whole notion (§ 160); but the individual or subject is the notion expressly put as a totality."

a more universal substitutory love of to the point of an identification, striven after in religious language by saying that Christ was "made sin for us". Let us, then, be "made sin" for one another. Who can forgive sins but God alone, asked the rationalist theologians of those times. Forgive one another as God has forgiven you, declares the Apostolic tradition, adding though that the former is condition for the latter. It is in this universality that we "become what we are", persons. Sin here, the being "made sin", is the *unzulängliche* of Word becoming Deed, as for Aristotle contemplation, *theoria*, was the highest or ultimate *praxis*, though he could not say how it might become this. Hating our lives in this world involves, finally, not wanting in this world to be better than one is, i.e. not divorcing or abstracting the ethical motive from aspiration to infinity, from death and resurrection. This, properly understood, is as much Catholic as it is Lutheran while, we claim, it is the conclusion of philosophy, of the "know thyself" of the oracle known to Socrates. Such knowledge finally includes all, as every moment of the notion is the whole notion.

Thus the "I" is the "universal of universals", subjectivity as such transcending in deep immanence each subject, so that when we mean to say anything falling short of that we cannot say what we would mean. This is the falsity of all finitude. In fact, therefore, the whole of nature and history is contained in such logic, such dialectic. It is to such inward thinking that Spirit successfully brings all back. What we seem to live out is thus in reality eternal thought. It is the one Word that thought sends out to return to itself eternally in any and every moment, ever new. So it is itself, such thought, *nous*, the notion or, indeed, concept, the actus actuum omnium, sovereignly free self-reflection without hesitation or "shadow of turning" and, just therefore, absolutely necessary.

Theory and practice. A distinction, whatever else it is, is a holding apart. So it is a divorce, a dichotomy, whether in the conceptual realm alone or in things themselves. Many philosophers have indeed denied that there can ever be any valid distinction in reason that is not also in reality. The formalities of thought, they want to say, reflect a yet deeper formality on the part of "things". So to the subtlest modality of thought there will necessarily correspond a *distinctio formalis a parte rei*, in the words of Duns Scotus, here, one might so interpret, taking the fundamental step away from the near-total medieval reliance upon Aristotle towards the idealism later judged essential.

In medieval thought and life this separation was especially instanced in the cleavage between the "active" life of *praxis* and the "contemplative" life of *theoria*. The active life belonged to our existence in time; the

contemplative life, already or, rather, ideally, participated in eternity. So the active life, to which most men and women are assigned, again ideally or in its abstract conceptual purity, did not participate in eternity, in "heaven". For them, the medievals, or this type of consciousness, it was a mere condition for heaven's attainment. The moral virtues, that is, Aristotelian habits though supernaturalised by grace, by charity in particular, were needed for the conduct of practical life and for reaching man's Last End, *finis ultimus*, natural or supernatural. The series in reality terminated or, in practical reasoning, commenced by this end was not, all the same, in essence temporal. The end is one's aim or purpose and participation in eternity is not properly a "fore"-taste. There is no absolute before and after.⁵³

We found Aristotle saying that contemplation, *theoria*, is itself the highest *praxis*. The schema, that is, has its limits, is finite, not absolute. The category of "performative" utterances might thus be extended into any utterance whatever. Utterance is an action, a *praxis*, and we can extend this idea to thinking itself, the thought, *Gedanke*, which elicits the words, the utterance. For Aristotle there denies the separation, expressing a monism. In saying theory is *praxis* he sublates the distinction, while in the same way Hegel's systematic exposition of Logic sublates itself while Method, in becoming the Idea, is absorbed, though we express this backhandedly by saying, in reverse, the idea is the method. What appears, therefore, as method in Hegel's treatise, what is studied by generations of students, is phenomenal to the Idea, to the Absolute, to McTaggart's "heaven". Thus also action and contemplation become interchangeable names, should we speak for example of love or study. I can either see my work, my loving, my artistic creativeness, as prolonged contemplation, as thinking, or I can see my thinking, my listening to music, my "letting being be" (Heidegger), as the place, the occasion, where I am most active, most alive, most practically "engaged". One can speak of this, "the mystical"⁵⁴

*

⁵³ Cf. the short treatise on man's Last End (*finis ultimus*) which prefaces and controls Ia-IIae of the *Summa theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas. The reasoning there, and as described above, may be seen to correspond to that "C-series" which, in McTaggart's thought, is the reality behind that phenomenal series misperceived as time. Thinking, in Hegel's words, "is blessedness", therefore (cf. *Enc.* 159).

⁵⁴ Cp. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 7.

The Hegelian philosophy, or that of Nicholas of Cusa, and its dialectic has "thematised" this feature of reversal consequent upon the finitude of our concepts. This reversibility just noted itself discloses the core of what we call mind or even, as spirit, existence. Yet this disclosure, in overcoming truth's hiddenness, revolutionises the conception of truth itself, answers Pilate's question about it anew. It answers it, however, by recalling us to the original answer, to an absolute subjectivity. Hence it reveals the essential in the "ecumenical movement". It summons us, namely, to the summit of the dialectic, where whatever path taken leads. Hegel's thought might be seen, in effect, as a fruit of meditation upon that related saying of Pilate's erstwhile or, indifferently (if time is indeed illusory), imagined⁵⁵ prisoner: "I am the truth". Indeed, as concerns Pilate too, one cannot judge this, as he is taken (*gemeinten*), "individual figure and its past"⁵⁶. He is named in the Creed, chiefly as giving the time- or historical reference.

Thus the reciprocal substitutability of theory and practice as finite opposites is further instanced as between materialism and spiritualism. This comes out once a certain step has been taken, common to both parties, that, namely, of consigning everyday experience to a realm of "misperception". For many philosophers, as indeed physicists⁵⁷, time is an illusion of immediate consciousness merely. The same applies to matter conceived as extended stuff, for example. For Descartes matter was already not the stuff itself, but pure extension. Now, however, the extension, space, has been relativised along with time.

So we may find a world of timeless spirits postulated as alone absolute. All that is perceived, could we but overcome time's illusion, is ourselves, one another, other spirits, concludes McTaggart, interpreting Hegel, however. The self, all the same, is admitted to be out and out paradoxical. Even knowledge or thought itself is argued misperceived insofar as taken as final reality. This is, rather, something more perfectly reciprocal, such

⁵⁵ I do not assert that it is imagined but that it is indifferent whether or not we say this. Or, if we look at a picture we do not imagine the picture. This is the being of non-being, of the contingent. "Nearer my God to thee... e'en (even) though it be a cross, that raiseth me", as the old hymn had it. Again, "Whether we live or die we are the Lord's". Absolute idealism, as crowning in disclosing philosophical method, acosmism even (as facit of creation), is just therein the nerve, or fullest reach dispensing the rest, of religion.

⁵⁶ Cf. Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p.788 (Baillie).

⁵⁷ E.g. Max Tegmark, *Our Mathematical Universe* (2014), where time and matter are explicitly reduced to the mathematical. That is, he denies matter while stopping short of the meta-physical. While for a Boethian, such as Maritain in this connection (cf. his *The Degrees of Knowledge*), this would be called the "third degree of abstraction" for Hegel it is final overcoming of all abstraction whatever.

as we best know in our notion and experience of love, according, again, to McTaggart's philosophy.

Or we have a world, charted by "materialist" psychoanalytic theory, where the infant attains to the possession of mind as a kind of neurotic defence against the external and hostile (Freud, Klein), where what is taken into self, as nipple into mouth, gets represented as affirmation, while negation converts (to "object") what is spat out. Mind becomes here a kind of dream we mindlessly weave for ourselves. For here we must notice that matter itself, the surrounding "viscosity" thus interpreted, is woven by, into and with precisely this mind. Mind, at an earlier period, wanted to define mind against or within its own undefined operation. Now it reintegrates and indeed absorbs matter. It no longer "matters", therefore, if one is materialist or spiritualist, for one monism is as good as another if we are simply dealing with schemata, a set of symbols with which to represent ourselves to ourselves. For every set of symbols is not just a consciousness but consciousness itself, an "intentional system". This is the mutual cancelling or "identity in difference". So if the animals have consciousness in this sense they have symbols and signs. Yet they may well themselves be but signs of our own devising, unless disguised others. Animal consciousness though, taken as such, is, one might want to say at least, merely analogously thus taken, a relation to a partial environment like ours to reality as a whole. Yet we typically, and "neurotically", scale down this rational openness to relation to a merely select environment again, where we adopt a finitely exclusive intellectual stripe. Ecumenism requires of us such an admission, to which, we claim, the zigzag dialectic of the ages has brought us.

The monism of self in other, other in self, lay coiled, along with the paradox, in the Greco-Thomist account of knowledge as requiring that we "have" the other as other. This verb is here replaceable by "be", "are", while the qualification "intentionally" disappears as we penetrate into the logic, the mind and heart, of love, for example, as term of knowledge, its final *sapientia*. Just as the spiritualists deny matter, so we can also say that matter, as irrational, that is to say perishable and potential, denies itself. What is perishable has perished or, rather, never was, is not. Dualism is a psychic device for holding reality at a distance, preserving an illusory autonomy, which one yet disguises under an inauthentic submission to law. Everything here gets subverted, freedom confused with indifference. The autonomy is that of law itself, of universality as "principle", finally, "of personality", in Hegel's words, an identification we may as well invert, however.

It was though very hard to abandon dualism, its clinging vestiges, to cast all one's cares away, become what one was not, go through what one is not, find self in other. The case is similar, psychologically at least, with the infantile desire to be loved, perpetuated in the "neurotic" family. The Franciscan slogan that "it is in loving that we are loved" is a literal truth. It requires that we no longer dance to the tune of others. There is a time when one needs to do that, as others, too, will no doubt follow us, for a time. But we must say to them, "Greater things shall you do than I have done." Everything, in short, has to be generalised. Only by daring to do this do we confirm the original wisdom "from above", thus ourselves becoming man. *Agnosce, o christiane, dignitatem tuam* – I cite a fourth century glimpse (Augustine's) of the Hegelian idea. This commission rings down the ages and we, other sheep in another fold, continue to fulfil it.

*

The point is this. It is reason itself that conceives – in fact it merely represents (*vorstellt*) - reason to have emerged, in time as thus anterior to it, out of the irrational, called material. This position though is untenable, that is, contradictory. The rational cannot emerge out of the irrational without being one among that mass of imagined processes from which it imagines itself to emerge. That is, nothing that is not irrational can emerge from the irrational. For nothing emerges from it as being other than it; that is what the irrational means.

What this means in turn though is that the irrational cannot rationally be thought, since if I am thinking then the rational is there, of which we have said that it cannot thus emerge. It is a simple necessity. And if the irrational should be there with no connection to some supposedly emergent rationalism then there is no need to think or attempt to think it at all. That, rather, would be arbitrary and so doubly irrational.

This means again that the hypothesis, within a dominant materialism, of emergent rationality is no more than a picture or model, an inconsistent one indeed. The hypothesis of evolution, that is, elicits idealism as a frame⁵⁸, indeed, within which and within which alone evolution can be postulated without contradiction, since idealism leaves science just as it is, even if it situates scientific knowledge as a whole somewhat differently.

⁵⁸ Cf. the late Axel Randrup: "Cognition and biological Evolution", CIRIP (Copenhagen), 2004, and related articles of his available on the Internet.

To affirm an ordered material creation, on the other hand, is to be committed to a dualism of finite and infinite that is equally contradictory, as if the finite, in order to exist, must limit the infinite or unlimited. Talk of "ontological discontinuity", as a way out of this, merely returns one to idealism without saying so. The being not continuous with divine being is then not distinguishable from the being of a divine idea of anything whatever; as against the Thomistic teaching that any divine idea must be identical with the divine essence⁵⁹. Or, if one cannot conceive of ideas without intentionality, then speak of dreams, veils, categories rather. Existence, which Hegel calls a poor category, is also called, by McTaggart, a *species* of the real merely. Thus while for Aquinas *viventibus esse est vivere* for Hegel life is not the ultimate category, as is shown, quite simply, by its outcome in death. Death does not come to life from outside or contingently. It is the index merely of the finitude of the conception of an organic unity of parts within a whole.

It can seem, however, that it makes no difference whether we call created realities things or ideas. Of course we call them things. Where else is language born? That is, one is at liberty to use the language of realism. But such realism should be open to the development in fact occurring as philosophy passes over to the divine point of view. This is the point of view the so-called mystics have ever tried to hold in focus and not lose. It is implied in the ideal and canon of reason, as is also an absolute subjectivity, and hence an "inter-subjectivity" which enhances and does not cut down this absoluteness. It is rather a coincidence in identity of as many solipsisms as there are subjects. We beget one another.

The casualty in this line of thinking might seem that of an analogy of being seen as anything other than a rule of speech. In the end there are as many ways of being as there are things. That is, being is said in many ways. That is, being is just nothing, the emptiest and widest of predicates, totally variable. It is the first building-block of our system of language and predication and it merely gets in the way if it is treated as anything else. Thus I cannot ask if I exist, unless I as it were already exist. I am necessary, as existence is not, and the same applies to God. God's existence is swallowed up in, as identified with, essence. Yet this judgment too is reversible, "essence is being" saying that essence, God, is not anything at all, which is "the freedom of the concept" or of all thought. Yet here too we may recall the French priest's reply to the young man's self-presentation as a "free thinker": "Free, yes; thinker, no". Every judgment is one-sided, Hegel asserts, in uncompromising contradiction in

⁵⁹ Aquinas: *Summa theol.* Ia 15.

performance, which is in fact the speculative mode, though this is not a mode but concretely absolute in its ideal self, opposed thus to “the ideality of the finite”, to all finite ideality. “But the truth of the finite is rather its ideality... the chief maxim of philosophy” (*Enc.* 95).

If though one insists that the rational cannot come from the irrational then the way is also open to, as it seems, camouflaging one's idealism by speaking of the spirituality, the rationality, of matter, which science dutifully uncovers. This is the way of Teilhard de Chardin. Gottlob Frege too spoke of “the reason which is in the world”. He asked, rhetorically: “What is the world without reason?” To speak of it so would be equivalent to “washing the fur without wetting it”.⁶⁰ Nor is this really different from our position outlined above. The common factor is the need to situate the finite with respect to the infinite. An acute facet of that, however, is the need to situate oneself with respect to absolute subjectivity, of which one is, traditionally, “image and likeness”. That thought is screwed tighter, within religion, when one speaks of the being, person or spirit “within”, destroying even this “within” by specifying it as true self or closer to self than self. So we arrive willy-nilly at the philosophical system described.

We might say that Freud's early hypothesis, of material mind, was confirmed by the consequent successful interpretation of dreams. It can confirm, for example, how dream ideas become telescoped or condensed, one word being formed to cover two quite diverse situations or wishes, say, insofar as both emerge from a present (material) flow of energy, of neurons, of a sheer or indifferent quantity. Yet this account fails completely to account for Freudian science itself, for intellect and truth. One flow of neurons is as good as another and advancing a pragmatic theory of truth involves one in an endless regress therefore explaining nothing. Any predication, even of pragmatism, asserts that something IS so. But how, we might ask, is a “spiritualist” account of mind any better off? The answer, surely, is that spirit has to be understood in the Hegelian way, namely, of the superiority of the notion to being (and essence). Spirit is thought, which never just happens to be so, since it is not so at all. Thought thinks itself. Aquinas approached this Aristotelian-Hegelian conception, but may have been held back under the influence of the *Exodus* text, that God is he who is, even though he himself, with Aristotle, distinguishes being and act as the true being, Hegel affirms at the end of the greater *Logic*, which is the (absolute) Idea, of which being is the first “moment”, *primum quod cadit in intellectu*. Hence Hegel speaks of truth

⁶⁰ G. Frege: *The Foundations of Arithmetic*, tr. Austin, Oxford, second edition 1953, p. 36e (paragraph 26).

as mind's correspondence with itself only, there being no "being of the phenomenon" (Sartre), except by an analogy, a *moment*, again, of thought quite in reverse of the usual account of this species of equivocation (of analogy, namely). God is the name for ultimate truth, transcending existence as suggesting (Hegel points out) derivation. We can, if we like, express this on a material model, just as every term in the language is metaphorical and taken from material nature. Consider, for example, the manifold uses of the preposition "in", for which we can find no basic equivalent, that is the point, but which does not therefore univocally constrain us. Thus Frege's objection to any equivalent to McTaggart's later replacing of the self-contradictory notion of time, that it presupposes experience of the latter, does not hold. Spirit is "ungrateful", progressing "from shadows to reality", though our language itself be formed in the "shadowlands".⁶¹

To illustrate or, rather, to concretise... Childhood is often represented as an awakening to presence in a palace of novelties and delights, in short, a place. This though is taken from a mere part of later experience. The child does not know inside and outside, spirit and matter. Again, subjectivity is primal, not the subject but this subject, I indeed. Any participation in a public world is under my control, as I invented the very idea of such a thing. True I seemed to lack power, to be thrown from one situation to the other, subject to joy and grief. But if the I is paramount this merely shows the falsity, the finitude, of the I which feels itself thus put upon. This is the meaning of affirming the actual.

The attempt is often made to reduce this puzzle to linguistic confusion about the first personal pronoun. This is obscurantist merely. Freud sees children as puzzling about where they come from and, secondly, why or how there can be also an opposed sex to his (chiefly, but also her) own. A variant upon this, again, is to wonder at the total improbability of one's being numbered among the definite number of those who are (others). For one has then no idea of infinity in relation, at least, to this. I do not recall completely what answer I found, if any, at the time of such wondering, aged five or six as time goes. At times, perhaps, one reduced the others, at times self, happier when one identified these two. The question, after all, calls for a reduction, of which Sartre's view that one must either reduce oneself in favour of God or God in favour of oneself is merely one form. As touching God one is invited later, or comes to it oneself, to think of oneself as "contingent", as freely called by God into existence, a kind of being chosen prior to the more definite election (or not) of "redemption"

⁶¹ *Ibid.* p. 54e (paragraph 42).

theories. Of course this idea of "chosen", as if from among independently (even of God?) existing possibilities, is theologically second-rate when not seen as a metaphor or analogy. C.S. Lewis suggests (*The Problem of Pain*, 1939, "Heaven") one is created to adore a particular part of the divine substance. This was a not very happy rescripting, the talk of "parts" in particular, of the text of Revelations (*Apocalypse*) where God says he will give every man a white stone on which a name is written known to that man (or presumably woman) alone.

But these attempts to remove final subjectivity to an external being demand, unless deeply "rescripted" in some more adequate way, a putting away of childish things indeed. The child, especially one not too happily convinced of being loved, will take another path. He may, for example, start to wonder, if he does not become entirely gripped by the idea, if the whole world, or society rather, is not brought about, put there, created, for the sole purpose of getting him put into prison. This no doubt comes in part from his grandmother's pretending to telephone the police when she cannot get him to behave, prison being a corresponding concept. Later he may labour under a dreary certainty of being set to be hanged one day. His dreams will be correspondingly drear, only entailing a wish, as Freud would require, in that they contain, often, an element of those he respected or loved encouraging him to face that he must thus be hanged, with their quasi-benediction, because one is, after all, "bad", not one of the community, that is to say. As one puts away the one, so one must put away the other, in final reconciliation, an affair first of "thinking", of self and other.

What does this prove? Nothing. It shows though that being subject (subject, not "a" subject: that is a later rationalisation) is not a matter of pronouns in the public world. There cannot, maybe, be a private language but there can be and certainly is privacy. This, as Descartes understood, is not the same as private being. I think, first of all. More radically, thought, consciousness, occurs. The infant surely has no *notion* of "I". Consciousness, all the same, is subjective. That is, it is not primarily object for its own or some other consciousness, but immediate.

For Aquinas those called "the damned" are outside the bond of charity, no longer to be loved, that is to say. But every consciousness, he too in himself, is in that position. It is not only the outsider in, say, Colin Wilson's sense, who has to make an effort to become an insider. Everyone gets socialised, with more or less violence, of which infant baptism is merely the archetype, whatever else it is. This is reckoned natural, whether by tribal Bantu ("One is a person through persons", they say) or by the Greek idea, as against contractualism, that it is natural to man to be born

into a state, at once political and moral. Contractualism thus represents an advance towards recognition of the primal reality of the subject, expressed by J.H. Newman in saying that he knew the only realities were "myself and God". The duality is already enough to raise the suspicion, as indeed with contractualism, that we have here an intermediate position, and that is the strength, the power for reaction, of the more innocent or integral Greek position which the medievals, themselves intermediate in their very name, wished to take over whole but in the end could not do so.

Newman indeed, as Wilson remarked, is a type of an original outsider who strove to become an insider. Once an outsider always an outsider, though, one wants to say, and those who pretend differently must sooner or later acknowledge their pretence. In Newman's case, as standing for the contemporary Roman Catholic predicament, we might say, the acknowledgement takes the form of revolutionary ecumenism, concerning which the document on this theme as "decreed" by the Second Vatican Council (a century later than Newman) is, again, clearly intermediate. Yet the fact of history, as of dialectic, shows that everything, from understandings of the Creed of Nicaea to green vegetation, is intermediate. It is, properly, the relative degree of intermediateness that must concern us.

"I am the captain of my soul", yet there too we have still a duality:

It is just the opposite, just the contrary, Hermione. We are all different and unequal in spirit - it is only the social differences that are based on accidental material conditions. We are all abstractly or mathematically equal, if you like. Every man has hunger and thirst, two eyes, one nose and two legs. We're all the same in point of number. But spiritually there is pure difference and neither equality nor inequality counts... But I, myself, who am myself, what have I to do with equality with any other man or woman? In the spirit, I am as separate as one star is from another, as different in quality and quantity. Establish a state on that. One man isn't any better than another, not because they are equal, but because they are intrinsically other, that there is no term of comparison...⁶²

Pure difference! Suppose there is a connection with idealism here, or, rather, a connecting of idealism with the primacy of love, that is to say, identity. Equality is here based not upon similarity but upon total dissimilarity, in virtue of either of which one might be equal. The dissimilarity can convey, explain or ground our terror or disgust, our rejection, of "other people", this being the thrust of the very word "other"

⁶² Birkin, imagined as speculating in D.H. Lawrence's novel, *Women in Love* (1920), Ch. VIII, "Breadalby".

(as it translates into “alien”, the pure other). We can also relate it to an uncertainty about our humanity, such as Descartes expressed in his *Meditations*, a basic document of modernity. I am myself, “a thinking thing”, before I know if I have hands or feet. Newman will repeat that he is more certain of God’s truth than of these appendages. This subjectivity is real, psychic and not purely formal or transcendent in that sense. Rather, each in this way is all, his own universe. He is it, he does not merely or at all inhabit it.

Suppose again, entertain the suggestion, that idealism distils the original thrust of Christianity, like “a rainbow after long storms”. The phrase is Nietzsche’s, as standing for forgiveness, which, it is often not noticed, by his Fascist patrons, for example, characterises his *Übermensch*. They found whatever truth they had in him, all the same, as the warrior Mohammed found it in his Christian and Jewish contacts. Forgiveness, reconciliation, is the essence of Christianity. The phrase might serve for wisdom’s replacing or perfecting faith and theology as a more perfect form of knowledge, as the Alexandrian Fathers had already envisaged. Theology, after all, was born in a Church at first without it, so it can also die or be *aufgehoben*. Nietzsche points out that forgiveness is what occurs in families. So a universal forgiveness gathers all spirits into a universal human family, the Body of Christ. But why is forgiveness thus found in families, to begin with? Because there the members exist mutually in one another’s subjectivity. Lawrence’s totally other Birkin sees himself as a being who carries within himself his mother (as she may carry him), his father, siblings maybe. Any idea of civic friendship would be useless. And so, the French Revolution, *alle Menschen Brüder*, the bond of equality with fraternity, is deeply Christian. This was Maritain’s argument, in his *Christianity and Democracy*, for seeing the Enlightenment as a fruit of the Gospel, realising the priesthood of those called laity, we might say. A totally negative attitude to the Enlightenment, it follows, would be not Christian.

In line with this otherness, not being literally member of a species, we have Aristotle’s doctrine of the specific and ultimate difference of intellect as containing all that makes up the being, not a part of it merely. Then we find that love corresponds to this identification of part with whole, since this intellect also contains all things, is (*quodammodo*) *omnia* or absolute, the Idea. We have to postulate a mutual solipsism, thus cancelling or transcending the phenomenal community in its abstract plurality, where each “I” says “I in them and they in me” or where all are “members one of another”. Those who reject this seem often not interested to know God,

how God must be, but only to keep God as major piece in a bullying and metaphysically obtuse ideology.

When Aquinas says that friends are not of the *esse* of eternity, but of its *bene esse* all the same, this is not finally satisfactory. How could it be? It betrays something unresolved, contradiction. The other is other, yet it is better, or more good (*bene esse*), that he were within me, but merely or altogether because he *is* thus within me, like the mother, child or sibling as we noted above. So I am he or she as he or she is I; this “as” we must add. In this way friends, all, are necessary, but as negation (other) negated again. I use the Hegelian terms because it would be perverse not to. They are to hand and, our analysis shows, are not jargon.

In fact the concept of God has fused with that of the self (here and in more recent work), the true self. Psychology’s attempt to restrain the unconscious, discovered or engendered within the parameters of materialism, has failed. It is and always was the wellspring of prophecy, guiding us out of the prison-house, out of any slavery whatever. The self, we might say, is ultimately ego-less. “I am that”, again, is a formula to hand and so not jargon. Every soul gets what it expects, said the saint of Lisieux, herself prophet. Again, you would not seek me if you had not already found me, a variant upon the Pauline sitting in the heavenly places, present tense. Our Christian filter does not fall short of any other. Nor do we debase our coinage in noting this. God, the absolute, is, necessarily, absolutely simple, for Aquinas his first attribute. The absolute is simple, is simplicity, that is to say, thought negated or, in a word, *aufgehoben*. Knowledge vanishes, perception in love, interpenetration, essence of the dynamic body, spirit, remains, *corpus* but *corpus mysticum*, *corpus Christi*, members one of another. All memory is here transcended, as it is in the childhood of the very elderly, who become all that they have been and were and are and who will become this, strength made perfect in weakness or *vice versa*. Living we die, but it is in dying that we live, in loving that we are loved, literally. It was always literal but we didn’t see it, making a jargon out of jargon’s denial, which was worse than ever. That is why we are all meant, eventually, “to cease all thinking” (John of the Cross), to know in unknowing. We may give thus the final word where we like. *Fac quod vis*. This though might be merely the beginning of poetry, of psalmody, as is maybe suggested by the later Heidegger’s development. In Lawrence’s novel, from which we quoted, Hermione reacts by attempting to murder Birkin, since he has effectively stated here that in his soul he does not need her. An Al Hallaj, Jesus Christ or a Joan of Arc can and have provoked similar reactions from those wanting spiritually to be needed. But regarding idealism, it makes little difference whether we *call*

things created realities or ideas. That is the point, really. One rejoins the tradition.

*

“Myself and God”: why the duality? Or why not? Whatever is limited is limited by something. Therefore the first truth or final ground is unlimited. It is not even limited by being, as if it had to *be*. Being is taken from our language; thus nothing can be, properly *speaking*, without being something. This applies even to being something unlimited. So to be unlimited is not just to be, i.e. it is necessarily differentiated, for one could not explain its simplicity as a “potential” differentiatedness, potentiality being a limitation. The simplicity must transcend being and thought too. The differentiations, we may want to say, are the differentiated bodily histories, themselves signs of a more ample serial individuality or reality. The bodily is this, i.e. it is not, except as sign, i.e. it is formally or purely sign, not something that is, in virtue of some (other) matter, a sign. It is not. The real infinity is to be found, therefore, exclusively in this individual, over and over, as part containing the whole, this being what characterises subjecthood or self as such, that it truly has the other as other (in Hegel’s system on the Trinitarian model). Thus, when one is searching for God, ultimate happiness, greatest conceivable or first truth, the Oracle commands the searcher: “Know thyself”. This is the ancient confirmation of absolute idealism, where “I” is the absolute universal, *atman*.

Again, if we hold to being according to St. Thomas's distinguishing of being as common to and being as containing all things, then being would only do this by actual differentiation, since nothing potential is admissible (in God). Here one might appeal to the finite essence (ideal) or form (real) as limiting otherwise infinite (but surely not formless) being, but such forms too regularly know or possess other and even all other forms, in knowledge actual or, temporally viewed, potential. In short, our not knowing what God is extends to our not knowing, in some cases at least, what he is not, e.g. is God my true self or another? For if we always knew what he was not, we would effectively know what he is, which is *ex hypothesi* excluded⁶³. Or he is the other who is myself, the self who is yet other. We might therefore be permitted to prefer not to speak of or in terms of God.

⁶³ Cp. Aquinas, saying we most truly know what God is when we know that we cannot know this.

Essence is the idea, of anything, of any thing. Form is its actually being, being what it is (and not some other thing). Yet being, says Aquinas, is the actuality of any and every form (*actualitas omnis formae*). This *esse* in his second sense is not yet, however, the divine being, *esse divinum*, which is unique and typically gives such actuality, *esse*, to all else, to every finite thing or form, in what is called creation, an act (of intellect and will) accomplished in eternity. Thus the angels are at once pure form and potential (to their creation). They are, like numbers, nothing other than their what, their notion. Thomistic angels, we might say, all the same, seem, on the pictured surface at least, to witness that in the idea of God's power which he would deny, power to "create" specifically, and so differently, the laws of logic or mathematics. This can seem to be against his own notion of divine necessity as perfect freedom and goodness (without which, he says, the will "of the prince" would be evil). So the Thomistic angels, for all Thomas tells us, might seem self-sublating, as they become in Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Mind*, useless to count indeed. Power to create a different logic surely includes a power to change the past, to see, that is, that there is or will be no past. But this again is a pictured way of denying the final truth of "pastness", while a different logic would be illogical. Yet a sympathetic reading of Thomas's breath-taking angelology sees these future developments as "enfolded in" it, in the idea of a personal species, for example. In the end logic itself is a dialectic of all the persons that are, have been or ever could be (this latter thus becomes a null class: persons are as such actual). "The principle of personality is universality" (Hegel).

The model of infinite being as causally behind all finite beings, including angels, seems doubtful. The angel has to be created united with the forms of all things, innately. He has all others as other. What he does not have is knowledge of his creator as his creator alone knows himself, remaining there essentially hidden, not out of a holy coyness but as simple consequence of being in no way passive to any other mind. God reveals himself to those he makes fit for it, religion teaches, while philosophy see revelation itself measured out in proportion to just anything as bearing it. Ultimately this implies a closer relation of God to his exodus in and as nature (*Enc.* 244) than the analogy of making at first allows. He is one with nature, as a veiled unveiling, an unveiling (revelation) in necessary alienation, necessary as closely bound up, again, with the Idea's infinity necessarily *othering* itself as Word", *verbum interius* or concept, "other", in Hegel's own theology, being, all the same, the first model, so to say, for what would otherwise be the "mystery" of evil. Thus, in Hegel, Satan,

“prince” of this alienated world⁶⁴, which is creation, gives way to Christ in the proto-paradigm of infinite self-consciousness. If the angel shall know God it will only be by God's empowering or giving this knowledge, as he gave the original forms innately, but now, theologians have to say, by a grace beyond nature, which the angel may either accept or reject, and this is the origin of heaven and hell both. Since, however, everything is grace, for “as long” at least as that concept can be needed and extended, the “idea of nature” remains a representation only. Like time, it is real for Spirit only so long as Spirit needs it, i.e. only as thus represented. Grace, meanwhile, thus becomes indistinguishable from necessity, not by a harsh reduction (since the identity must be mutual) so much as in illustration of the “friendliness”, so to say, of just reality⁶⁵.

Instead of this we may conceive of infinity as necessarily differentiated, as we even find in theology (the Trinity), though not in Thomistic “natural theology”, which is thus not properly philosophy of religion. For this latter could not co-exist with some other treatment of the matter. Or, rather, “there are two systems in Thomas Aquinas” while “in Hegel there is only one order”⁶⁶. Since though infinity does not, could not, differentiate itself (as actualising a potentiality) the differentiations must themselves be necessary, as are the persons of the Trinity. God is necessarily such, as he is necessarily simple. Once admit such differentiation, however, and we might as well admit a differentiation (of infinity), without denying the absolute unity and simplicity (i.e. for the same reasons as the Trinity does not contradict this)⁶⁷, into any number and even an infinity of persons, each being necessary to all, to the whole, as the whole is necessary to each. Thus, if we consider, our eternal blessedness must consist in, must be, the consciousness that we are necessary, that God creates us as necessary (this is not “the one thing he can’t do”). This is St. Thomas’s

⁶⁴ Alienated as any possible planet or star must be alienated, contrary, in at least that respect, to what is pictured in C.S. Lewis’s inter-planetary trilogy. For Hegel the external creation as a whole is a negative moment in the full and eternal divine, so to say circular process. Only when we see the former as a whole (the goal of science) to we find our way beyond it.

⁶⁵ I borrow this association, of “friendliness” and “reality”, from Leo J. Elders S.V.D.: *The Metaphysics of Being of St. Thomas Aquinas* (E.J. Brill, Leiden, New York, Köln, 1993) and its sequel, *The Philosophical Theology* of the same.

⁶⁶ Georges vaan Riet: „The Problem of God in Hegel: Parts II-III“, *Philosophy Today* (English translation from the French, from the Latin), Summer 1967, pp.77-78.

⁶⁷ The treatise on the Trinity in Thomas Aquinas’ main *Summa* gives reason(s) for this necessary compatibility of Trinity or plurality of persons in simplicity of nature (of the Idea, of God).

doctrine too, that created spirits (but also prime matter!) are “necessary beings” as, thus far, God uncreated is necessary.⁶⁸ This is an important pointer to the general soundness of the future Hegelianism.

The being that God gives will not be the divine being, since this is in its very conception given by none. One speaks, therefore, of an analogous being, i.e. confessedly not being in the same sense, equivocal. This at once though makes of God something “abstract” or “unreal” for the common-sense consciousness. In reality, though, what is implied is that everything finite or other than God is unreal, rather, or, in Hegel’s preferred use, untrue. “This ideality of the finite is the chief maxim of philosophy” (*Enc.* 95). One ascends from mere likeness, shadows, to reality. Whether or not, that is, there can be a being that is other than divine being is a matter of linguistic preference merely. Language cannot but raise some of its equivocations, deriving from the finite number of words available, to the status of analogy⁶⁹. It is like asking whether creation takes place inside (divine ideas) or outside God, a clear spatial metaphor. Here the outside is inside, the inside outside and, again, “there is one closer to me than I am to myself”. This “one” is the unity, the centre which is everywhere, the subject. I am that. Subjectivity, that is, cannot be created, still less be contingent. Aquinas indeed speaks of created necessities, such as angels and human souls. But here we envisage subjecthood as essentially uncreated. Thus we find in the *Old Testament* that angels and divinity easily merge and God’s sending his angel at length becomes his coming himself.

We shall not deny God, unless in denying him we affirm him, which is not unthinkable. “I and my father are one.”

*

A main aspect of the monism argued for here is the denial of time and change. Rather than add directly to the obsessive literature on a famous argument of McTaggart’s for the unreality of time, contrasting strangely with an ignoring or a disdaining of his system in general, it is time, so to say, to consider other pointers to time’s unreality. This was always necessary on the religious view of things, though the realist consciousness

⁶⁸ Cf. Patterson Brown: „St. Thomas’ Doctrine of Necessary Being“ in *Aquinas: a Collection of Critical essays*, ed. A. Kenny, Macmillan, London 1969, pp.157-174.

⁶⁹ Cf. Aristotle’s treatment of paralogisms in *Topics*, a text fundamental to the medieval development of the doctrine of the *suppositio* of terms, finite in number but having to “stand for” an infinite number of varied actualities, including themselves.

did not, simply could not, reach further than saying that "with the Lord" a thousand years is as a day. But even here, when we are told that someone, the speaker in the narrative, saw Satan falling from heaven or had glory with the Father "before the world was" we are not required or obliged to think that that speaker remembered these states and situations along with his consciousness of the everyday. We ourselves have arrived at the conviction of sitting essentially in eternity without thinking that this is something that we have to remember or recall.

The command to love God not merely above all things but with all one's heart, mind and soul, in triple emphasis upon what seems to try to be an exclusive totality, is not compatible with an alternative and finite reality. Thus the supplementary love of neighbour, as of self, gets finally presented as love and service of one presenting himself, in the narrative, as again as it were exclusively divine. We have seen, however, how philosophy overcomes this exclusivity by means of an identity not foreign to religion either, where, though, it remains at the level of the mystical or impenetrable, of "I in them and they in me", "members one of another". "Who are you, Lord?" asks Paul, in response to the question "Why are you persecuting me?" What is your identity? He is told in reply that in persecuting the Christians he is persecuting Jesus, who speaks.

So the poet urges us "to see the world in a grain of sand", echoing the mystic "This also is thou", for it is not "the world" as finite reality that he means, not at all. This finite world must also disappear from consciousness, as in religion it will be finally rolled up like a scroll. What is timed to die might just as well die now, says Lawrence's Birkin again. It must be risen above, be wiped out of our thought. It is misperception, McTaggart roundly judges.

We have the analogue of this view of things in how we treat language, words. Words try to be thoughts, though they are held back from this by their phonetic materiality. But just as (in the realist, late-scholastic tradition) thoughts, as concepts, are seen as formal signs, without other reality in themselves, that is, of what they are thoughts of, and ultimately as a mere relating of the thinker to that object, even called "the objective concept", so words can be seen as in aspiration formal signs of their *significata*. We do not attend to the word's own material reality, except by that reflexive movement which puts the word into *suppositio materialis*, as the theory has it, a state of "standing for itself".

This, in the religious consciousness, has always been the principle of "transfiguration", and it is indeed the whole attraction of this feast of the Church, the principle whereby some one object, on some privileged occasion, bears the whole "weight of glory". One cannot doubt, for

example, that this is the principle of especially the symphony among musical compositions, a fact of which symphonists themselves became increasingly aware, each symphony corresponding to "the birth of music itself" and not merely music. This is also the explanation, the rationale, of the state of "being in love", captured in "the figure of Beatrice", in whose eyes the poet sees, as in a glass though not darkly, the reflected *verbum Dei*, of course "incarnate".

Art, that is to say, overcomes time and matter. In the case of music it does this in the apparent medium of time itself. However, the same is true of common or garden narrative. We tell a story so that, once told, its substance shall be seen "all at once". The end of a good story is in its beginning. Beginnings and ends are annihilated, seen through, that is to say. This is a matter of "knowing the story", pervaded all through by the essentially happy ending. It may not be happy for the wolves or witches but they never aspired to happiness anyway, being simply monstrous, like cannibals, we think. Yet a human cannibal might eventually or eternally be happy, we have to allow.

On this view art or telling stories, these leisure activities, correspond to a periodic exercising of a more true consciousness than we generally manage and are thus far primary, like the periodic ritual worship of the religious person. Philosophy does not, says Hegel, "suppress" faith. It rather "accomplishes" religion and Christianity, for him, in particular, since he sees Christianity as "the perfect religion". We might, more ecumenically, think that any religion has an ideal or perfect aspect (as Christianity in experience is most often far from perfect). Philosophy though does not make religion useless, but quite the contrary, both having "true reality" for content.

Do we not though confuse the redemption of time and change with their annihilation? They are indeed figures of eternity. But that is just the point, that they are not on one level with it. Analogy concedes and at once obscures this. All things are in God and this is no restriction. The end-state of religion, *visio beatifica*, is how things eternally are and as it is the aim of dialectic to reveal, to plot not an alternative history on the historical level but history's key, how it is not just one thing after another. Already in Scripture it is said, of an earlier stage, that "these things happened in a figure". But our very own lives are figures, since life is a finite category, which just therefore "runs away" and creates the illusion of time, bounded by death, which, Scripture says again, "God did not make". So life and death are one; hence God did not "make" either of them. He *is* life, rather. It is not real as we think it, therefore, and death's entering into the world, as is there said, is a figure for the finitude of biological life..

*

We find that we progressively rejoin the infinity we projected on to the divine, in confirmation of that part of Feuerbach's thesis, whether or not he envisaged what we now envisage, deathless spirit, for example. As subjects, we find, we are not essentially men, though we take that form. We are abiding act, intellect, of which the body, and hence the humanity, is merely the possibility. It is not something else as joined to this form, which is rather its (own) reality and not merely an organic body's unifying principle. In that sense we are not a thing, some object, but pure subject. So when we love we are indeed like sons of God come down from heaven as attracted by beauty, of the daughters of men. The patriarchal myth can as well be inverted, daughters of God coming down to the sons of men. The pessimism of the legend consists in its implication that the one loved becomes object merely, is hence "of men", not from heaven, as is the one loving. One could in remedy imagine a son of God attracted thus outwards (rather than downwards) who then, from the loved appearance or species as locus, attracts into operation the spirit that is the lovely girl's true and eternal self or *atman*, her reality making her to be all she is. This *atman* in turn is finally identical with the "act of acts", self of selves and unity of the whole. It is, again, in so far as love is identity with the other, that love found generically between opposed sexes, as it is in its final particularity between opposed individuals (of any or no sex), i.e. opposed as individuals. In the universe of actual love, therefore, these individuals are simultaneously relations. This makes the form of predication constitutively false, distortional, since there are no subjects distinct from subjectivity, as God is his godhead. Inter-subjectivity therefore posits a plurality, a polytheism at variance with the final harmony, which is no longer made up or "composed", *komponiert*, but rather *gedichtet*. The interchanges, the exchanges, are not finally between otherwise separate "entities". My or your "act", actuality, is one with the act of acts. We called it in jest a universe of coincident solipsisms, but it is rather a matter of coinherence.

We find firstly, then, that we appropriate in aspiration at least that love for all which was maybe first imagined of just one Son of Man, of whom indeed we were told to learn. There, in that story, questions of jealousy were brushed aside, without compromising the absoluteness of love in any and every instance, of all in each. Jealousy does not finally belong in actuality; nor though does "the flesh" in general. This was a motive for the ancient preference of *amicitia* over *amor*, in apparent contradiction of our stress above, although one may indicate that *amor* can find a straighter path to that depth of *eros* which unites them both forever. *Amor* actually

participates in the perfect eternal compenetration which *amicitia*, in this phenomenal world, merely reflects, but without tearing aside the veil. The distortions of the former, therefore, may appear more terrible, although Dante was surely not wrong to place betrayal of just friends in uttermost condemnation.

Secondly, we have found that our world, our milieu and surroundings, depends upon our cognition, understood as including will, in refraction of final insight and as leading up to it dialectically. In this way too God is said to imitate himself, in creation. We have found also that we ourselves, I myself, cannot be contingent or from a totally other, but rather self from self, or from the self of selves. I am that. That is I. So, thirdly, we are in reality changeless and eternal, infinite therefore in the sense of not being limited from without.

Where we fall short of this we have not our true selves, not what we really are. It is a detached moment rather of the final yet eternal harmony, appearance merely, as God knows all possibles and as, insight represents him as saying, he remembers not evil eternally. This is the ground, again, of forgiveness, of wiping out what never truly was or is. The Cross, we might perhaps say, shows this wiping out. It is as real as anything in this changeable and temporal world, itself though, we find, a world of appearance and misperception. The reality of the Cross, of the glorified wounds of *Revelations*, the *Apocalypse*, is something quite different, as it were enclosed in divine procession. Thus it was represented in Trinitarian philosophy, pure coinherence and interchange again, beyond the ego as subjectivity transcends the subject.

You cannot have matter without dualism. In identifying matter with pure potentiality Aristotle got clear of matter as stuff. It is the potentiality precisely of the final actuality and ultimate difference. This includes all the actuality of whatever is in question, of substances in Aristotle's own system, for example. When we speak of the body, of embodiment, we speak of the possibility of exercising our actuality. That is why we said above it is no great matter that Freud presents his theory of the mind in materialist terms. For him the actual acts in this way. What is important is to avoid the dichotomy that is dualism, to pass over from soul to spirit.

For in saying that we are not essentially men we are not preferring part to whole. This perhaps is what Plato and Augustine could not see their way clearly to saying, on the right track though they were. The relation of act to potentiality is other than that of part to whole.⁷⁰ Sometimes this

⁷⁰ ... besteht der entscheidende Schritt in der Tat nicht so sehr im Übergang vom Wesen zur Wesensform, sondern darin dass diese als Akt verstanden wird. Das geschieht in den Büchern VIII und IX. Nur als Akt kann ein Formbestimmung alle

appears in Thomas's Aquinas's writings, e.g. where he stresses the unicity of the substantial form, of the ultimate difference, intellect in the case of man, that is to say. More often it does not. He has, for example, in accordance with the theological ideas of the time, to say that the godhead was united to the dead body of Christ in the tomb at the same time as it was united to his "separated" soul somewhere else. So we find him speaking of essentially "incomplete" substances, viz. body and soul, though both of these are mere logical constructs. To overcome the problem he would have had to generally deny the reality of space and time. There is no Docetism where this is generally denied. Docetism is only thinkable in a realist context, where the reality of specifically Christ's humanity (as in monophysitism) might be denied. Monophysitism denies the community of Christ with the rest of humanity. If though one rejects the vulgar notion of humanity as a composite then Christ is equal or at one with all other spirits, or "human beings", in being totally unique or other as is each of them, according to the view defended here. Each contains the whole universe of spirits within himself, as in the "high priestly" prayer of Christ, "I in them and they in me", of course not merely collectively but mutual to each one as each one is mutual to all the others.

Indeed we find Aquinas saying that "the body" is not necessary for the happiness of heaven, the *visio beatifica* specifically, and this is both right and wrong. We need to add that "the body" is a logical construct and not a part of Christ or of any human being, even though we commonly speak of human beings as thus differentiated from "pure spirits" or from God. As a pure potentiality the body may well not appear in our picture of the fully actualised spirit, intellect or consciousness. We might say, even, with Aristotle, that "the proximate matter and the shape (*morphe*) are one and the same; the one existing potentially and the other actually. Therefore to ask the cause of their unity is like asking the cause of unity in general... the potential and the actual are in a sense one."⁷¹ So, once more, Freud's materialistic model of the mind merits serious consideration, not as materialist but as not being dualistic.

For Aristotle these insights serve a philosophy of abiding substance. This again might seem correct, indeed corrective. Yet the discussion prepares the way for consideration of the first substance of all as that

ihr nur in der rein logischen Analyse (ratione) vorgeordneten Formen in einer einzigen (in sich selbst) vereinigen. Als Akt ist aber die Wesensform (letzte Differenz) ebenfalls nicht das Vereinigende neben den vereinigten wesentlichen oder akzidentellen Forbestimmungen... F. Inciarte, "Die Einheit der Aristotelischen Metaphysik", *Philosophisches Jahrbuch*, 1994, pp. 1-21 (14-15).

⁷¹ Aristotle, *Met.* VIII, 1045b 18f.

which really is, explains Inciarte.⁷² This first substance of all, in our system, is subjectivity, of individual or of the whole virtually indifferently. Yet also for Aristotle the first substance of all is finally characterised as "pure act", in accordance with Hegel's thought more than with Spinoza's, for example, who "intuitively accepted" a notion of substance which Hegel finds defective.⁷³

The Christian event was initially presented as comprising a series of miracles within a realist scheme. Miracles are not common-sense. They are hardly sense at all. At first, all the same, it was thought that our common-sense or unreflected view of the world as presented to our senses and analysed by our empirical understanding (*Verstand*) needed only to be dispensed with at these favoured points called miracles, of which "the incarnation" was chief. With time, however, the whole common-sense world was overturned. The things that are have been brought to nought as Paul foresaw, and we have been given, as fruit of the Christian event, an absolute idealism which is nothing other than a seeing of the world, in aspiration, from the divine point of view. This, indeed, was none other than the project of those called mystics, as if they hardly belonged to the human race. The fulfilment of this project was placed in a transcendent future by the official doctrine of the *visio beatifica* or seeing with divine or absolute vision, the light of glory bestowed by grace alone. This may well be true, but grace was still understood magically, by most people at least. The time has come to put this behind us, if we do not wish to lapse into pretence through mistaken loyalty to a superseded or antique model.

Maritain, Hegel and Idealism. "A Christian cannot be an idealist", states Jacques Maritain (*The Peasant of the Garonne*, 1966, p.100). One would need to know what he means by the latter term. At any rate he cites Hegel as "the maddest of them all". Correspondingly, he offers almost no discussion of Hegel, as he does of Descartes, Berkeley, Leibniz and Kant, but also Bergson, who, on the contrary, "really was a philosopher", and Husserl, whom he claims greatly to respect, though he caused catastrophe, he says. The omission, then, is striking. I find just three or four short references to Hegel. This is a great defect in Maritain's powerfully statement (or over-statement, perhaps, of his case), especially since it is Hegel's main achievement to have uniquely reconciled the contradictions in previous thought and philosophy, to have shown the true relation between finite and infinite, as compared with Sartre's blank dichotomy,

⁷² *Akt und Potenz... welche zugleich die Erörterung der allerersten Substanz als die eigentlichen Seienden als eines solchen vorbereitet.* Inciarte: *op. cit.* p.15.

⁷³ Hegel, *Enc.* 151 (subtext).

“Either man exists or God does”. Hegel even untangles the difference between existence and being, of which not a word in Maritain.

As for the claim that a Christian cannot be an idealist, one simply exclaims: “Why on earth not?” Maritain simply offers in answer the unthematized notion of revelation we have attempted to transcend here, in the way Hegel outlines and argues for. God *is* revelation, he concludes. Maritain, meanwhile, speaks of the “inner prison where we supposedly would be confined in company with the ideas of our mind”. This is a simple piece of unphilosophical *Vorstellung*, ignoring Hegel’s account of freedom or his logical identification of Inner and Outer. He also speaks of “our minds” without qualification, ignoring Aristotle’s avoidance of such finitisation of thought or Hegel’s further development of it, in his analysis of “I”, for example. Mind as such is infinite or else it could not know truth, which it is impossible even to state with coherence. In nature, naturally, by Hegel’s account, mind is found in a state of alienation, due to the infinite’s necessary, in order to *be* infinite, self-othering.. God himself, however, in and as “grace”, of free because infinite generosity, that is (I am using theological pictures), restores the harmony, leading mind, in the spiritual process represented in that succession of moments we call historical, to that fulfilment one with God’s own eternal being, leading it, that is, not to a temporal future but, rather, in a return to what it never left, ceaselessly or as it were all at once, this being in fact a participation in Trinitarian being, necessarily triadic as the very form of necessity itself.

So our mind is “the rule of what it knows” because it is not our mind. Such is Hegel’s claim, which Maritain ignores. Maritain says the Bible and the Gospel “radically exclude” this that seems to be more the very stuff of the latter, read with spiritual discernment rather than with a self-imposed blinkeredness, from whatever cause. All Maritain’s objections simply assume what he wants to demonstrate, the separateness of things from God. It is because of this separateness that he will not allow mind its freedom from limitation or closure, inasmuch as it everywhere participates in the divine infinity of Spirit, of *Geist*. Hence Hegel stresses that at any stage of development, the child, the unlearned, the professorial, mind is possessed by, indeed is, the Concept, the Absolute Idea, one with God in its difference. “This also is thou, neither is this thou”. As is said when discoursing on natural law, for example, we become what we already or actually are. So Christ preached along roads indeed, as I am writing this, but that, in Hegel’s words, is correct rather than true, and we have the whole long Preface to *The Phenomenology of Mind* demonstrating that. “The things that are seen are temporal, the things that are not seen are eternal”. Did Maritain forget that in his strange selectivity? When he was

at Princeton in the 1930s he joined in the defence of W.T. Stace, the Hegelian philosopher and defender of idealism who wrote on mysticism particularly, against attacks from the University's Dominican and Roman Catholic chaplain, asserting that Stace was doing the Devil's work or similar, thus helping, perhaps decisively, to get this ill-advised zealot dismissed. Did he change his mind? Did he come to feel guilty about this? In this connection I find it quite repellent, so to say off balance, about "at the outset a sin against the intellect" not distinguishing, he says, philosophy of nature from metaphysics, the natural from the supernatural, etc., as if a philosopher, such as Hegel, who indeed explicitly distinguished (in a separate book) philosophy of nature, should not even try to see these abstractions unified in one divine and absolute truth, echoing indeed the protagonist of the Gospels' (I borrow Peter Geach's phrase) style of proclamation. In the end this comes down to Maritain's charge of "angelism",⁷⁴ It leads him, however, to speak patronisingly of "the Moslem Gnostics", as if they did not represent an advance, albeit within Islam, of the barbarities of "faith in the one and transcendent God of Islam", concerning which St. Thomas says, in the *Summa contra gentes*, that the Moslems believed "too lightly" (*leviter*), this being indeed the opposite sin against rational belief specifically, he says. He puts himself in bad company there, then.

All these shortcomings, we argue here, depend upon a pre-philosophical fixation within a realist consciousness, to which it is just not possible to claim that a Christian, a member of "the spiritual community" (Hegel), is bound. Only a particular, so to say "brain-washed" consciousness, can see, for example, in the Apostle Paul's writings confirmation of such a consciousness, fundamentally anti-mystical and, so to say, inquisitorial. It is representative of a Catholicism of a past epoch or moment. Nonetheless, and this is the paradox, few have contributed more to our understanding of Catholic tradition and appreciation of its truth, than Maritain. A similar outlook finds expression in Gilson's *On Being and some Philosophers*, to which I myself owe a great deal. There is more to be said but for the purposes of this book and of "the thematisation of revelation" I will stop here.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* p.115, repeated from his essay on Descartes in his deeply sarcastic *Three Reformers*.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE HEART OF THE MATTER: THE MATTER OF THE HEART

The Absolute is without limit, infinite. This alone is desirable as satisfying. To have it is to know that all else, in its idea as “else”, is nothing, is pure idea or “ideal”, is thus “sham-being” or, it is the same, evil¹. This is the evil that is in God, as all that is finite is there alone, but as a moment of the same and not itself merely or abstractly. As such it is good, i.e. as known absolutely. Thus, the outside that must become, be known as, inside has yet this moment of outsideness, of evil, in logic as itself the divine method, at once, in idea and in *the* Idea, therefore, reconciling it, as death is “entry into spirit”, as Cross is resurrection, Hegel’s theology interpreting the representations of orthodoxy, despite his speaking up, on occasion, for those historically found less than orthodox. History must include all contradiction as being itself in its ultimate specificity, the history of philosophy, according to Hegel’s philosophy of history

To know as I am known is to be known as knowing God. McTaggart sees all perception “in heaven” on this model, deeming perception that than which there is nothing else, since also we ourselves, as each particular ideas when viewed or thought abstractly, are thus perceptions, in mutual immediate perception. We thus “beget one another” mutually, are “begotten not made” (said of Christ in the Nicene Creed). This, McTaggart finds, is the absolute idea as a perfect unity he refuses to call God. As perception this heavenly state is not properly or abstractly knowledge, McTaggart finds, positing a subsumption together with will, i.e. as one, into a unitary final state of Love. He accordingly suggests that Hegel omitted to place this as final conclusion beyond that to absolute knowledge merely. One may counter that this is not clearly more than a

¹ Here Hegel coincides with the Gospel: “Why do you call me good, since there is none good but God?” This, though, is put in context as, given the truth of the attribution, affirmation of divine, hence absolute, subjectivity on the part of the speaker, something Hegel the declared Lutheran will not have missed.

difference of vocabulary, bearing in mind, though, that Hegel's own tendency is to reduce *all* irreconcilable difference to this, to "overthrow the nature of an opinion" in the words of his anti-liberal critics². Yet why not, once given that what can be overthrown thus cannot be a "nature" after all? To be evil, anyhow, Hegel finds, to return to our opening subject here, upon which the rest depends, is to have or seek knowledge as possession, of all, to "seek to be as gods, knowing good and evil". Thus seen, then, evil is the greatest good, so to say ethically. What is genuinely evil rather, in full negative sense, is not-knowing, ignorance, as on the Socratic view. The paradox resolves itself if we recall that by Hegel's logic, as seemingly against McTaggart here, good, and *hence* evil, are themselves *aufgehoben*, sublated, in logic's, the method's, final step., it being the greatest evil, lack or sham to be ignorant of this method. Kant had tended to divorce "moral" good and hence evil from the "physical" or from goodness simply, i.e. meta-physically. Hegel corrects or transcends this moment of philosophy's history, thus preparing the way for Nietzsche's celebrated, and hence execrated, "beyond", while recalling the Biblical "I am", supreme while simplest assertion that "The factual is normative" (Hegel). This, in turn, is nothing other than the doctrine of "natural law" in a nutshell, fiercely opposed by present-day Kantian moralists who imagine they are Thomists, while they accuse those deferring to reality of "biologism" or similar.. Of Hegel's absolute idealism (as philosophy's dogma the mediating foundation, I claim here, also of Thomism, but which, in its Hegelian variant, Thomism itself consequently mediated³) they have scarcely heard, it seems.

Thus God creates what is outside himself as inside himself. Time or space, as mutually reinforcing alienations, are outsideness (*partes extra partes*) as abstractly perceived by "the rational creature". So God knows

² One example of these, though not mentioning Hegel by name, was Pope Gregory XVI in his Encyclical Letter, *Mirari vos*, c. 1831.

³ Plato and Aristotle, nonetheless, remain the great mediators of the whole, of wisdom as first entrusted to *homo sapiens*, though the "one and only" mediator, in Christian faith, remains one, mediating between and thus overthrowing the esoteric-exoteric opposition by absorbing the good into the best, the finite into the infinite. This "first", however, only signals the nineteenth century heresy of "traditionalism" if we retain a realist consciousness and view of history as against absolute idealism, the "dogma of philosophy" (Hegel). One may thus view the rise of Christian mysticism, where abstractly defined as *against* philosophy, as a natural result of Justinian's sixth century closure of the Platonic Academy at Athens, thus opening the way for the Scholastic movement as grounding the rationalism of the Enlightenment along with the pugnacity of contemporary anti-theism.

time in its falsity or unreality, thus destroying it⁴. This falsity, as of mere moments aspiring to independence, is true also of the rational creature. He is thus counselled to “hate his life in this world”, a world which he should also “hate”, so to say. “I and my Father are one”, one exemplary man said, rid of that false self as finding it again there, “in the bosom of my father”. I touch here upon what some find an ambiguity in the Hegelian Christology. Yet Hegel’s science of logic dissolves the ambiguity, postulating the mutual identity and begetting of all by all, a truth, however, mediated by just one individual and the spiritual community with which he is identified, as having in death identified himself, as having been thus identified, however, “all the time”. Hence the truth that results is *its own* result, as Hegel puts it, logically or from eternity, so to say, since it is the same. Christ, so to say, became what he was and is, thus exemplifying or, more accurately, “exemplarising”, the path, way, each is to tread in all its splendour. He puts this, and thus it now appears, as philosophical, as *logical* truth. But if he, in his life’s process, was not ending something but mediating something else, then this must be true of any life, of life, living, as such, just as we discover now concerning the finite natural forms as such. These, therefore, Teilhard de Chardin has insisted, must be seen, in the systematic wholeness of their science, as proceeding to one final end or “omega point”, which he identifies, as Hegel too appears to do, as Christ, saying therefore, by implication, “now you are the body of Christ” (Paul the Apostle). Who is this “you”? McTaggart insists we do not know, i.e. in relation to ourselves empirically, so to say, while maintaining a “cosmological” probability that “we” are meant. He does not reflect sufficiently, however, as a consciously Christian more easily might, on the doubts his own and Hegel’s system casts upon our present reality as separate individuals, despite his entertaining notions of “reincarnation”, in whatever sense a philosopher denying the reality of matter can take that term. Matter, says Aquinas, is a necessary being, but since he characterises this matter as a pure potentiality he equivalently says it is necessarily nothing. Hegel’s logic shows the reasonableness, all the same, of this. Like any other genuinely philosophical posit this may be applied without prejudice to the Christian dogmatic tenets in what is interpretation, not destruction, though on occasion, one grants, the latter may be an instance of the former. Here too though, “I am come not to destroy but to fulfil”, i.e. that is how things, whatever they are, should be seen, not necessarily with ease.

⁴ Compare the self-refuting Biblical paradox, “There shall be no more time”.

By this, then, everything, then, is nothing. God too, as beyond anything, is nothing. Thus Hegel destroys Substance in favour of Subject or Spirit. So we see ourselves, as it were obstinately, “as having nothing yet having all things”, more truly affirming both sides of this than is often done. We affirm, that is, the contradiction.

Sin is first posited as the cause of misfortune, of death, which “we” would avoid. We must have sinned, we think, to be thus threatened and afeared, not seeing that this itself is the sin, our very finitude. From this false consciousness, and only therefrom, arises self-consciousness. Does God thus arise? But then he would be finite. Rather, this living tableau is what God is, as one with his work(s). He changes not: that is the deeper truth behind denial of potentiality or affirming that all is accomplished. Rather, all that is, we affirm, is. God does not work as if labouring. God is, being itself is as containing all, the end, in this beginning, arrived at, similarly, “at the end”. This, in fact, is “the analogy of being” or rather, Hegel shows, what lies behind this expression., the absoluteness of God, the Idea, in and with which all finitude is united in self-abjuring love, crying out, in Augustine’s description, *ipse fecit nos*, he made us, this notion of making, however, receiving the philosophical thematisation, in Hegel, wanting to it, as is already so very obvious in Plato’s *Timaeus*. No literal “maker” “creates the same and the other”, still less blends them.

The hunger for this being, Maritain’s or Pieper’s philosophical *eros*, the tears, the passion, is the uniting in unity, not mere union but unity, the differences being no longer difference but sameness. This is joy unshakeable, erupting into the world, jesting at wounds as open to no scars, the battle won eternally.

*

The Idea is nature. Thought and reality are not two things. Time and space, therefore, are thought. Every category is the Idea. This alone is the sense of “creation”, as Hegel allows it. “Time is real” means time is real in God: he created us with what we must learn is misperception or pictured perception. How can this be so? How can it come about and why?

“A merely infinite and not also finite thought would therefore turn out to be merely indeterminate, and thus devoid of content, ‘abstract’ and formal” (G. Rinaldi, “Identity of Thought and Being”, in *Absolute Idealism and Contemporary Philosophy*, Peter Lang Verlag, 2011, p.188). Yet “Consciousness posits itself only as a sphere whose radius is infinite” (C. Gentile, *Teoria generale della spirito como atto puro*, Sansone,

Florence 1916, cited by Rinaldi). So what is finite thought? What is finite nature (if it is “God’s word”)?

What is essential is to see that this infinite consciousness, as just mentioned (Gentile), cannot be a development from below. This is what Hegel stresses in explaining Leibniz’s preference for final above efficient causes, to the point where, in his own system, these efficient causes will become mere mirages of deception. Final causality indeed is only assimilated to this fourfold pattern by an error in perspective of the understanding specifically. To be for another as one’s end is to be put by altogether, replaced, absorbed by that other to the point of being not even a memory or vestige, as having been all the time one with that other in what one might best call an unconscious knowing, as of a “prophetic soul”, of whom alone it might be said “You would not seek me if you had not already found me”. This saying is a strictly rational supersession of the paradigm of seeking without finding, i.e. finitely. Thus the finitude of the intellect, as one can find in Aristotle and his later associates, who in general avoid talk of individual mind (as distinct from “soul”, on which one may profitably consult Hegel’s section on Soul in *The Philosophy of Spirit* (Enc. III). Mind, rather, is limited in its exercise, not in its being, by the abstractly limiting conditions of alienated nature, with *partes extra partes*. It is that which we “have... within which passeth seeming”.

CHAPTER NINE

HEGEL'S THEOLOGY

When the self-conscious being cancels and transcends its immediate present, it is as universal self-consciousness. This notion of transcended individual self which is Absolute Being immediately expresses therefore the establishment of a communion which, while having its abode in the sphere of pictorial thought, now returns into itself as the Self and Spirit thus passes from the second element constituting it, - figurative thought – and goes over to the third – self-consciousness as such.¹

Here we have Hegel's theology as a whole. In dying to immediacy, in adopting the standpoint of Absolute Spirit, whether, indifferently, in esoteric philosophical mind or in exoteric mysticism, exoteric as a potentiality immediately natural to anyone, which is faith, we "pass over" to universal self-consciousness (as "the angel of the Lord" passes over is: we "do not die but live").

Since each one, "one by one and silently", does this in transcendence of his or her abstractly individual self into universality, each one namely (by name, even), this indeed "immediately expresses therefore the establishment of a communion" (stress added), of the Church, the *ecclesia*, assembly, Hebrew *qahal*. Here we have Hegel's theology of Trinity and ecclesiology in one. Aquinas, by contrast, never wrote a treatise (*tractatus*) on the Church or *De ecclesia* such as his unfinished theological *Summa* leads one to look for. Hegel's treatment, therefore, prompts us to look for indications of his mind on this topic in his treatise *De Trinitate* (*Summa theol.* Ia QQ 27-43). The final question there indeed treats of "divine missions", visible or invisible, of course in religious "theological" mode, addressing in eight articles, each with "objections and replies", exactly those matters Hegel's texts here and elsewhere give us further clues for resolving.²

¹ G.W.F. Hegel: *The Phenomenology of Mind* (tr. Baillie), p.775.

² Thus: article 1, "Whether it belongs to some divine person to be sent"; 2, "Whether the mission is eternal or temporal only"; 3. This article asks whether such mission is (*sit*) according to a gift of "grace" alone (Aquinas affirms this); 4. Whether the Father is sent: negative, although he "inhabits the mind by grace",

The immanent process and the self-manifestation of community are thus one, for Hegel, at least as God and nature generally or, he adds, God and human nature particularly, are one. Here it is understood, indeed asserted, that it is natural to man to transcend his nature, to transcend himself, namely, in self-consciousness as such or in spirit properly speaking. Hegel thus, we may say, views the phenomenal revelation-event or picture, inclusive of birth, death, resurrection with ascension, the visible manifestation of (the) Spirit, as an account, in pictured representation, of how man became, or becomes (“no birth, no death”), in that eternal process which “man”, as spirit, is, the Church, the Idea, God, the Body (of Christ).. You who are many are one and members of one another, the Apostle proclaims, in kerygmatic yet “speculative” (in Hegel’s sense of the term) phrase.

So Hegel, we may say, offers us a charter of globalisation, of not merely brands plucked from the burning (refugees) but of destruction destroyed, of God as “all in all”, in what is finally a quasi-Einsteinian “globe” or sphere with no limit and yet attainable. Thus the picture of a continuous expansion outwards, in physical cosmology, really says no more than this, less in fact, inasmuch as it is a finite conception, with a Big Bang posited in separation from this expansion as also from “universal self-consciousness”, where self is known as being rather than bang.

This might be thought to correspond to the purely or “sectional” Protestant conception of an invisible Church and to depart from the Catholic one. This is a perspectival illusion, however. Where the Catholic Church, namely, stresses a visible Church it speaks from the common perspective of untutored exoteric consciousness, as formerly it spoke of miracles at the level of that consciousness. Its own theology strives ever to correct this, however, speaking, for example, under the figure of a line going through each person separately as separating the false from the truly spiritual in him or her. As one approximates more and more to the Spirit as alone real, as God, one is more incorporated into, by identity with, Absolute Spirit. The visible Church is, by virtue of visibility as such,

since mission is only by another; 5. Whether the Son is by invisible grace sent “to inhabit the mind”; 6. Whether there is an invisible mission to all participants in grace; 7. Whether the Holy Spirit is sent visibly, since article 5 is explicit that the Spirit too, with the Son, is sent invisibly; 8. Whether no person is sent unless it be by that one (*ea*) from which it eternally proceeds, either Father or Trinity as Aquinas seems to affirm in replying, but only here in the body of the article (there are no separate replies here), which concludes by denying that a man alone might give the Spirit, as the third objection here had argued, since it is an effect “of grace”.

phenomenal, sacramental, as one might say. The Church is the sacrament of the Kingdom of God, of the Kantian Kingdom of Ends. Here, as in Aquinas's eucharistic hymn, where one receives, in communion, or "communicates", all receive. *Sumit unus sumunt mille*. He and Hegel agree that it is "useless" or worse to "count" *in divinis*.

Looking back now from that text as first quoted we note that the transcended individual self as, or which is, Absolute Being, has specific content, as that this very phraseology itself gives just that content specifically. "The Divine Being has come to itself in the sphere of the sensuous present." That is, the theology of the incarnation too has been included in that of the "establishment of a communion" as the coming to himself also of man himself, of creation or of nature, with which the Divine Word is identified.

This coming to itself of the Divine Being, however, which in and for Hegel means thought's freeing itself from imperfect notions of the latter, involves revision of our whole received set of notions of Good and Evil. The good (man, deed, word) is "made sin for us". In that sense we have to go "beyond good and evil", beyond "the law", as later echoed by Nietzsche. Yet hear Hegel's contemporary, Beethoven: "Power is the morality of those who stand out from the rest and it is mine" (his *Notebooks*). This standing out from the rest is a duty imposed upon all! It is baptism, whether of John or, finally, in and as realised end, of Jesus as mediator or Messiah, the one to come and thereto "anointed", *christos*, whose death to Greek or Judaic verbiage was the final seed of the eternal or ever-coming future, now seen to be and always to have been "now".

This for Hegel, as it was for Aristotle, is theology. Some clerical writers (but not only they: cf. our previous discussion of Maritain), such as F.C. Copleston or Karl Rahner, in younger days at least, seem unable even to conceive of this option. Thus Copleston takes it as "self-evident" that Hegel's system, his entirely theological vision, is not, as would be that of Thomas Aquinas (or something he, Copleston, might write himself), an elucidation of the "faith once for all delivered to the saints", while Rahner, around 1960, contributes the comprehensive article on "Trinity" to the would-be encyclopaedic *Sacramentum Mundi* without even mentioning Hegel (he stops at Palamas). That a Lutheran, and a layman at that, attempted to offer the final word on such matters, could not be other than presumption. Such attitudes, however, have lost their appearance of self-justification in the light of an ever more profound apprehension of the Second Ecumenical Vatican Council's (Rome, 1962-4) "Decree on Ecumenism".

For philosophy, however, everything remains the same as it slowly comes to light that “first philosophy” is in fact theology and indeed “sacred” as being *höchste Gottesdienst* or divine service and worship at its purest. For, as Aristotle put it, contemplation, *theoria*, “is the highest praxis”.

It follows, however, from Hegel’s system, of logic and/or metaphysics that a lot of what passes or has passed for theology remains picture-thinking, at least in the sense of a concern with the phenomenal that remains at the phenomenal level. I postpone consideration, however, of this vast topic, inclusive of what Hegel calls the necessity for such thinking, as moment, returning to a presentation of Hegel’s system as such, in the hope that the typical objections raised here will be dealt with along the way. The key to the solution of them, I believe, is not dismissal of “the sacramental principle” but a universalisation of it to all finite things, uniformly evil in their “ideality”, their isolation or abstraction, according to Hegel, of all and each of which we must say, nonetheless, without discrimination (this is the truly mystical or spiritual rejection of judgment): “This also is thou, neither is this thou”. Thus an objection to the specifically sacramental system of the Church, taken literally as by the finite Understanding, is considered by Aquinas in his main *Summa* at Part III, 60, article 5, including the third “objection” and the specific reply especially. His general reply simply invokes divine authority, offering no refutation of the stance (of this third objection) that freedom under “the new law” should not be constrained (*arctari*), but rather limiting himself to pointing out that the Church wishes us to order our lives around just these seven sacraments proper. One is tempted to draw a parallel with his answer to those objecting to the military or crusading religious Orders of his time, not existing nor tolerated in that form by today’s Church. But if they can be disused, then why can not a certain closed interpretation of the Sacrament of Order, say, be disused? In fact, on Hegel’s analysis, all finite judgments or definitions turn round into their opposites, back and forth, like good and evil generally, to come to our next point.

In general, again, it is a dangerous thing and mischievously counter-intuitive to suppose that the relation of ancient Israelites to “the seat of Moses” (cf. *Matthew* 23) and our relation to God and his mediator, in the Spirit, as Christians, is to continue unchanged in character. The Founder was neither scribe nor Pharisee, but much like to a prophet “and more than a prophet”. Thus the question raised by the evangelist Francis Schaeffer, as to “who is in the continuity of the Church”, is ever topical, not to be ruled inadmissible. This is the chaos within order such as science, for its part, has been lately discovering as, it seems, essential. For the same

reason there has to be a plurality of religions, Hegel argues, even while one of them be, according to him, "absolute" (thus, however, it somehow must "contain" and "fulfil" the others, or all that is genuinely religious in them). In general the ecumenism now affirmed cannot stop short of giving the right also to the side opposing itself, as the evil opposing the good is found, on Hegel's analysis, to be the same as the good (*and yet* surely not), neither in effect being either of the two abstractly, but conceptually sublated, while this too is a good and legitimate development of earlier positions, one moment succeeding upon another.

This, it may be said, was what was feared all the time about "ecumenism". The spiritual man, however, "judges all things" (my stress) while, as McTaggart assures us, "in heaven we make no judgments", exclusively perceiving loved persons rather. Meanwhile, "Let both grow together until harvest" and "judge not". Yet what else do we do in philosophy? We can only reply that we judge that we shall withhold judgment and, yet more radically, that "all judgments are false". Hegel, we may say, reinstates here a salvifically inverted Hume after the insufficient Kantian attempt at neutralisation of the latter.

CHAPTER TEN

PRIESTESSES, PRIESTS, SACRIFICE, RELIGION AND THE CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT

During November 2016 Pope Francis flew back to Rome after attending the Catholic Church's meeting with world Lutheranism at Lund, Sweden, at an ecumenically celebratory marking of the passing of half a millennium since Martin Luther's initial revolt against some then papally sponsored interpretations and/or developments of Christian tradition. The function had gone off euphorically, mutual ignorance concerning one another had been lessened. Stockholm's Catholic bishop, subsequently made a cardinal, was interviewed for the media together with the Lutheran lady archbishop in full regalia, both confirming that they happily agreed to differ in regard to this and that.

On the plane later, as was shown on Swedish television, the Pope was asked, by a lady journalist, whether or not he was anticipating a time when there would be women Catholic priests. The Swedish (Lutheran) Church has a majority of female *präster*, while boasting of a valid "apostolic succession", though they rather ignore the question of intention, which was so prominent in the controversy over "Anglican orders" a century and more ago, of whether, specifically, the intention remained to ordain "sacrificing priests"..

Sweden, in fact, is virtually obsessed by the question of sex equality, *jämlikhet*, leading to demands for quotas based on an equal ratio in every walk of life and, as natural sequel, the promotion of homosexual or unisex "marriage" and the like. The once state Church, unlike the more traditional "free churches", among which the local Catholic church tends to get counted, or the large body of resident or refugee Moslems, is keen to reflect and sponsor this natural feeling for justice, as it is widely put over as. Concepts of an equality in personal dignity transcending such a demand while respecting personal otherness and reciprocity seem to exceed local powers of comprehension.

So what was the Pope's reply? After a pause he began by remarking that the Swedish ladies tended, he had heard, to be rather masculine in a

general way and this to a competitive degree. Hence, he had been told, the Swedish men quite often sought their wives elsewhere. After this somewhat disconcerting jocularly (as viewed by Swedish medial or other ladies) he flatly replied that he thought there would never and could never be women priests, appealing to what he saw as a final declaration by his predecessor John Paul II. This was the main news item on both of the state-sponsored news channels that night, though the chief privately sponsored station, TV 4, did not even mention it. This could reflect Sweden's having a Socialist government at the moment (2017), after eight years of rule by the middle-class Alliance of opposition parties, although it must be said that a majority generally go on paying lip-service and more to this deeply ingrained ideology even during these *bourgeois* interludes, after a more than forty year period previously of uninterrupted dominance by the Socialist Party, also called Democratic.

*

Anyone inspired by ecumenical hopes, to which the Catholic Church finally committed itself (or made explicit its intrinsic commitment) at the Second Vatican Council (1962-1964), can only find this papal response, the flat negative, sobering, though maybe enlivening for some as a call to mobilisation against this particular apparently ill-conceived aspiration, toward priestesses specifically, a mobilisation that should include a will to see the truth that might energise it. One might, however, discount such disquiet by ascent to a height whence the only apparently or immediately conservative viewpoint loses its sting, whence priestesses or priests would in themselves be "no big deal". For, paganism once transcended, just anyone and everyone can and do sacrifice, in a religion no longer, as the acme of religion, finite, the *sophia* one surely sought in religious praxis in the first place. This would elicit such questions as: What is a Christian priest? What difference does (did) Christian faith make to priesthood? It will ask the same two questions of sacrifice, *viz.* What is it? How does Christianity fulfil or "sublate" it without removing its conceptual content? It will further ask these two questions of *religion*, what it is and in what sense Christianity is (just) a religion, not something more, whether as "religion itself" (de Lubac) or, which might be the same, more than that, since religion itself, the perfect divine service, in view of Hegel's analysis of it as perfected in philosophy, might transcend and absorb all previous religion in "absolute knowledge", corresponding to a perfected or absolute revelation which, he says, is just God himself, the *bonum diffusivum sui*.

Thus one would explore whether there be possibilities for side-stepping the dilemma in transcending it? There is in fact something comic in the notion of “women priests”, but less so in Swedish, where the term *präst*, plural *präster*, is anyhow used indifferently of the Lutheran minister and his Catholic namesake, as the latter thus becomes. It is thus equivalent to the English “minister of religion”, merely, untutored references to Moslem *präster*, consequently, being rather more common than elsewhere (where they might say “clergy”, mullahs or equivalent). There are no institutional sacrifices in Islam. Some historical reflection will, then, clearly be involved. Any such history, however, is a descent into the universally autobiographical, the telling of the story of human life over a temporal and spatial period. As such, from the Hegelian viewpoint of absolute idealism, it is recourse to the phenomenal, since life itself is “only the Idea immediate” (Hegel), i.e. not the Idea absolutely. The phenomenal might thus seem to include gender. In the spirit, or “in Christ there is neither male nor female”. Such was religion’s own verdict. Yet the moments, including gender, as Augustine had judged, are indeed saved, absorbed rather, in eternity, fulfilment of the erotic, in the Idea, where “nothing is lost”, not even, or least of all, “the beauty of the bodies of the redeemed” in Thomas Aquinas’s words. This beauty, he argues, who thus contains, we might say sublates, all that of animals and plants, who thus require no separate resurrection either formally or individually. Or, even if men and women have different “souls” (Edith Stein) or life-principles specifically, the correlative notions of man and woman, in regard to personal dignity, are one and the same in the spirit, which is the Idea. Yet is not the Blessed Virgin eternally feminine, even *the* eternal feminine, for “revealed religion”? A sufficient reply, without getting on to C.G. Jung, is that Isaiah speaks of the motherhood of Israel’s unmixedly masculine God. Rather than mixture, we have identity in difference, as for any two that are one. Hence it is precisely with the other *as other* that loving union is possible and indeed required. Why reduce the scope of this? Such a premise, of equality, does not require that men shall bear the children they seed into the recently discovered *ovum* (Knaus Ogino, 1900) and the like, since these and suchlike differences are clearly, as visible, temporal, hence phenomenal, as art-works or philosophical *propositions* are temporal and hence phenomenal. Only Spirit is *different from itself*, is “pure difference”. But if even our being born is, has to be, phenomenal then an equal superficiality, as phenomenal, must apply to the sex of the priest and even the sex of Jesus or, after all, the *theotokos*, Mary (thus given the masculine or “first” gender by the defining Council of Ephesus). By this, however, the progressive may infer indifference to priestly sex, hence to the

feminine, the conservative may, with equal force or lack of it, urge discounting of the female for sacred office, since both argue enthymematically. Where then is the identity in difference, required generally in speculative logic (*logica docens*) for the overcoming of abstraction? Ladies and girls now operate in our armies, at every level, without distinction, as Mary herself, in at least Catholic tradition, leads a “blue army”, thus increasing rather than diluting her Mary-ness.¹

We can extend this line of thought, Hegel teaches, to most dilemmas, such as that between theism and atheism. For belief in God, in a notion of God, is itself phenomenal to the extent that it is not simply the Idea absolute, since it is uniquely this Idea itself that *is* the Absolute, which latter is thus itself, conversely, Idea. “There’s the rub”, for some. The believer, though, may counter that it is only or specifically *God* who is the Idea (“there is none good but God”), provided it be kept in mind that “God” is, has to be, a *nomen naturae* and be that just as being the most *proper* of proper names. God is indeed his own name (and hence cannot be rightly named, this being a hidden significance also of “I am who I am”, inclusive of I will be who I will be, say some Hebraists), as he is, for Hegel, his own result. This is, accordingly, truth as such, his Logic teaches and concludes.

It accords with this that the seer of the *Apocalypse* saw no temple in the “eternal city”, as we recalled in an earlier chapter. The vision, while still of necessity employing picture-ideas, even in dispensing with this particular picture (of a place of worship), is not thereby secularised, however, but rather philosophised and indeed, in the Aristotelian sense, theologised.

¹ A wag, indeed, or the present writer, might draw here an analogy with the “blue film”, both notions, of such an army or film, retaining something of the excitement of Delacroix’s deliberately female figure astride the revolutionary barracks. This idea, in turn, of female astrideness, indeed, directly recalls the new vistas upon erotic love in close association with feminist liberation. Yet astrideness, upon poles or trees, was referred to by Augustine in the context of pagan religious celebrations as too plainly indecent to need demonstration, contrary to the “decency” of what becomes (*decet*) “matrons”. We approach ineluctably the mental region of the British “Carry on” films of half a century ago now. Humour, it might follow, is essentially “unbecoming”, whence, I once heard of a preacher claiming, Christ had no “sense of humour”. Yet it is manifest he was as full of it as he was essentially relaxed, so to say (as I heard from another preacher). Only thus, with humour, can the last truly be first. Absence of humour, in the identity of being and nothing, is the main fault, the finitude, of ritualistic or principled discussion of the sexual or of gender in abstraction from the totality of spirit. It is a mark of art, for example, as first of the three forms of Absolute Spirit, to rightly break a rule at the right (or even the wrong? Here humour comes in) moment.

Thus he says he saw no sun either, because, rather, God is the light or sun of these citizens, as they themselves are God's temple, i.e. they are where God dwells (they are thus, in a sense, everything, dwelling, like "in", acting as metaphor for identity), one in their multitude, many in their unity. Each is one in self-consciousness with the Idea and is thus absolute and *the* Absolute or, Hegel would go so far as to say, is it in not being it, love being the precipitate of this deepest and therefore necessarily differentiated identity, as Hegel again argues in his writings, reasons in his thinking, claiming for this the name of thought itself, of logic. "This also is thou, neither is this thou". McTaggart might have better acknowledged this.

The history of religions, accordingly, does not escape the Hegelian rubric, governing all such manifestations of "ungrateful spirit". In proportion as spirit or mind comes to understand a religious phenomenon spiritually, or in the light of reason, the earlier and apparently foundational concepts, as coming first in time, are discarded, the new wine of reason demanding a new type of bottle. At the same time the content, of both earlier and later, remains the same wine, "that maketh glad the heart of man", whatever his age and level of development. Nothing is lost, nor, equally, lacking in advance. So it is with sacrifice, in regard to which the death, and also life, of Christ is reckoned the "full perfect and sufficient sacrifice" as instantiation of this concept, even the only sacrifice, to which earlier forms looked forward as being themselves, *sub specie temporis*, backwardly cast shadows.

*

For Christian ministers to be priests they would indeed have to be sacrificing priests, in accordance with the ancient conception of a priest, Latin *sacerdos*, partially cognate with our "sacrifice". Hence the need, in sacramental theology, for the celebrant to intend the sacrifice which the mass only thus becomes, not however at each celebration of this "Mass", the eucharist as it is also called (though here the meaning is thanksgiving simply and not sacrifice). Rather, the intention is postulated necessary for the bishop or higher priest "ordaining" others to this office and character (sacrament of order). The officiant himself may be drunk or unaware at any particular celebration, as such a mass continues to be. This, anyhow, is the Roman doctrine. Once ordained the priest's actions effect the sacrifice *ex opere operato*, which indeed means he himself need not be clear-headed as to what he is doing or even believe he is doing it! Without this there can be no firm belief that the consecrated elements are *as such*

“changed”, transubstantiated, to Christ’s body and blood, as it is put, in a figure since each element or particle of it, bread or wine (that was), is the whole Christ, it is generally inferred in teaching. So, and by contrast, if this bishop or high priest does not intend to ordain “sacrificing priests” then he does not do so. The precision of this conceptual machinery permits suppleness only up to a certain, ever shifting and hence ever disputed point. Yet might there not be a contradiction there? If the bishop merely follows the rite of ordination as we have said he or any priest might merely follow the rite of the mass, in or when celebrating it, might this not suffice, or why does it not, in a parallel way for ordination? Why is *that* not *ex opere operato*? How can one know he himself *is* a bishop, that the historical line of succession (but does it really depend on this?) has not been broken? We have here a feast of questions for the understanding (*Verstand*) specifically, rather than for reason (*Vernunft*).

The feeling here, in fact, is one of having descended into the minutiae of the phenomenal. We might contrast the loftiness of Hegel’s discussion, rejection even, of private meanings replacing the universality of “I” and *mein* or *meinen* indifferently. Who knows or can know the intentions of the Elizabethan bishops, any more than they might have known it themselves, drunk, (at “the Nag’s Head”) or sober?

The whole discussion, anyhow, is dependent upon a univocal notion of sacrifice, such as we have already questioned above in referring to a perfecting of such an idea. The sacrifice of or to God, one of the Davidic Psalms declares, is “a troubled spirit”, since this, “a broken and contrite heart”, is what God will not despise, while a prophet contemptuously asks, or has God ask: “Do you think I want to eat the flesh and drink the blood of goats?” Sacrifice of life, in the intentional shedding of blood, the life, is the ground-instance of a sacrifice. Thus even in the *New Testament* collection the author of the *Letter to the Hebrews* declares: “Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins”. He clearly refers to ancient concepts in Hebrew religion but uses this, surely analogically, to justify belief in the necessity of and for Christ’s death as his “going away” (Fourth Gospel), he who “poured out his life unto death”, and for a bloodily inflicted one at that, for such remission, arguing *ad hominem*, viz. against the Hebrews. Yet here it is the one sacrificed who sacrifices himself, as perhaps himself influenced by or taking on that particular finite conceptual religious scheme, as dying as a Jew for Jews in the first instance. In accepting this letter into the Scriptural canon the bishops of the later Empire (Council of Carthage, 396) endorsed this theology of sacrifice. How literally though was the whole idea intended? Was not even that initial declaration of a bloody condition for forgiveness already an

analogical form of expression, consciously or not? Thomas Aquinas would later declare that the smallest drop from a finger of Christ's blood as the divine man would have sufficed for forgiveness of all sins, surely manifesting thereby a certain independence, even humorous, again, of this ancient and finite notion of sacrifice, the language of which, all the same, passes into Christianity. Aquinas certainly did not envisage Christ's sticking a pin in his finger, perhaps saying a prayer, while saying: "There, that reconciles everybody, it is accomplished!" He indeed states that the hypostatically united humanity of Christ is the efficient cause of all grace but without anywhere giving an account of how this might be effected.² It has in fact to be assumed into the universal concept of the divine necessity as freedom and conversely. Thus God has willed it, as one says. It is subsumed into the Idea, along with all possibility.³

So, anyhow, in Christian religion, we are raised near to God by a Cross as instrument of torture and death, the divine man sharing what all can be and have been subjected to, as implied in his truly becoming man "for us", to employ a Hegelian category (*für uns*). Philosophy subsumes this under love as identity in and with otherness, now seen to be constitutive of the divine nature as such, of the Absolute. Seen thus, it is not easy to dismiss the Roman and Catholic requirement for genuinely sacrificing priests, without acknowledgement of analogy, though it is the consequence of a less than philosophic epistemological realism, simply. One may of course ask whether or how this necessity, if it be such, works against the inclusion of women among such priests. Religions, if not that of Israel, have had priestesses from of old. So the main point must be that Israel did not have them, just as Israel issued finally, according to Christian belief, in a God incarnated as male specifically (though in him, as having become "a

² Philip Reynolds points this out in his essay in the collection *Contemplating Aquinas*, ed. Fergus Kerr OP, acts of a conference held at Heythrop College, London: SCM Press, London 2003, UND Press, Notre Dame USA 2006.

³ In this, product of the correlative association and mirroring of all language, we may note again the paradox of Christ's saying of some confections that they were his body or blood (these two also are or become interchangeable in eucharistic theology, not untouched by rationalism perhaps) when they manifestly were not, as they would be though after he himself had consumed them a few minutes later. In fact they were shared by all present, who thus became one body, if what he had said of his body was indeed in some essentially mystic or spiritual way, which yet includes that body on the Cross (this is also one of the meanings of resurrection), true. Yet his utterance gets used to make sense of adoration of "consecrated" (by some priest) bread outside of its function, so to say. I am not here and now rejecting such adoration, in search, rather, of what must be the sense of it as of those words then and there pronounced, as is believed.

living spirit”, by Pauline theology, there is “neither male nor female”). That is, sex, along with the corresponding pronominalisation, is phenomenal, as, for example, otherness is not. Hence it is that what gives thrust to the sexual ecstasy is union of the selfsame with the other or, to speak logically, the sameness of the different. It is a fundamental instance of the principle of the one-way absorption of the finitely phenomenal, the phenomenally finite, into the Idea as moment, while granting that the Idea has no parts that are not themselves the whole (*Enc.* 160). Hence its especial urgency, mistaken in earlier thought for uncontrollable concupiscence as “wound” (of “original sin”, according to Bede the Venerable, one of four such wounds, along with ignorance, subjection to death and other such. But we should be careful to call any such thing a mistake without qualification in a universe where the same is the same as the different, or is different from itself, therefore, while good and evil are finally the same (Hegel’s own phrasing, for which he in part apologises, in *The Phenomenology of Mind* but not only there: it is yet more pronounced in the logical works). By this, I would want to suggest, that if this is the same as three-valued logic, as some aver, yet it is also not the same, simply, as that. Dynamic human sexuality as a psychic and spiritual force, anyhow, while at the heart of our physique, is the final proof of our entitative immateriality, that of all-encompassing spirit, whatever we wish to say, in mistaken relevancy perhaps, about the animals and associated bivalent phenomena of nature.

A further move might be to ask: What is sin?⁴ Where one talks about sacrifices for sins it seems itself to be, or to have been reduced to, a sacral or ritual concept and thus it is treated in the Books of the Law, though from the beginning the spirit of the texts, and not only those of the later *Deuteronomy* or of the prophets, was working against this primitive limitation which still affects our more conventional moral prejudices today. Ritual uncleanness and sin get run together, as in our proverb: “Cleanliness is next to godliness”. So, get rid of sacrificing priests and you get rid of sin, it might seem. You don’t get rid of Christianity thus, however. All this, I am sure, or near enough, is known to the Roman

⁴ Cf. my book, *Reason’s Developing Self-Revelation*, subtitled “Tradition in the Crucible of Absolute Idealism”, Cambridge Scholars, Newcastle upon Tyne, 2013, especially Chapter Three, “Beyond the Sin-Paradigm”. A version of this chapter was first published by some English Benedictine monks in their journal, *The Downside Review*, January 2007, as the third in a series of articles there collectively entitled “On Thinking the Tradition”. There, though, they changed this title, without asking my permission, to “The Sin Paradigm”, *beyond* which, clearly, they did not wish me or anyone else to claim to go or to be led.

authorities and, at least implicitly, to all the faithful past and present. They never thought God wanted to eat and drink animal flesh, believers in sacrifice though they might have been. The command, “Let him who reads understand”, not to mention “her”, stands firm forever, i.e. before and after the *phenomenon* of texts, as it stands firm that “The letter kills but the spirit gives life”, confirming Hegel’s asserted view that the spirit is more than life while including it as the “idea immediate”. So what I am saying is that sacral terms, at the time and place that the Mediator lived and moved, such as sin, sacrifice, consecration, were common parlance and therefore he used them. In fact, but with increased understanding and consequent analogical resonance, we can and do still use them today. Hence we can read and appreciate the deeply analogical Scriptures and that more than ever, having this treasure in earthen vessels, as the Apostle says. These are philosophical conclusions but not less “pious” for that, I trust The phenomenal situation requires one to give attention to such clarifications while keeping the main matter(s) firmly in view. Let the reader do the same.

So, we have attempted to place the issue of women priests in a wider context, though there is actually just one context, which is, simply, text, word or letter, and that is the transcendent context of the Idea, in which all oppositions are, necessarily, reconciled. There is no “great divorce”, by Hegel’s logic not even a divorce between being and nothing. Our closest term for this is freedom or, equally, necessity. In and from this the issue might come to be found settled for all parties still concerned. In fact we are continuing to attempt this, however, in settlement. Thus, regarding sacrifice and the Catholic mass, recent scholarship, along with faithful meditation plus active mediation generally, has brought forward some comparatively new reflections. Thus it is pointed out that a new stress upon the sacrificial theology outlined in *Letter to the Hebrews* coincided with the period immediately succeeding the Constantinian enthronement of the Christian religion as *the* religion of the Empire. “In this sign you shall conquer”. This period was one of inevitable pagan backlash, aided by defeats, by German tribes and others, which the Empire, divided into two parts by the same Constantine, had begun to suffer. Conservatives blamed these humiliations upon the lack of sacrifice, not necessarily to the old, dethroned gods but to gods or God, to higher power(s) in general. Sacrifice here becomes, viewing the controversy in a mirror now, a precision of the general Christian concept of prayer, worship. To answer the criticisms Christian leaders pointed to the eucharist, the mass, as our sacrifice, one, in the developed theology, with that of Christ, eternal therefore and not merely witnessed at a given time and place by some few immediate

associates: "Even if we should have known Christ after the flesh we know him so no more", wrote St. Paul, feeling perhaps at a disadvantage to the other apostles, such as he claimed to be, in this respect. In fact his very appearance as chief apostle "to the gentiles" is itself confirmation of this view, held by the faithful, as a view of, faith in, the indefectibility of the Church even, in every generation "until the end of the world", as it obediently strives to "teach all nations". What matters, Paul goes on, is "a new creature", a new creation. Now this unfailing newness, this abiding novelty – "Behold I make all things new" – is interpreted in Hegelian theology as Absolute Knowledge, as absolute self-comprehension, according to the Trinitarian relations (of differentiated identity) in which all consciousness, as becoming self-consciousness, participates "up to the hilt", so to say, all being called upon to "become what you are", literally now, in the essentially "ungrateful" movement of spirit. "Forget also thy father's house", leave everything, and thus become "all glorious within" (cf. *Psalms* 45).

Regarding the Last Supper as deliberate institution of a sacred rite (of sacrifice as, next step, it then becomes), Geza Vermes' considered opinion, expressed in one of his books, is that this is probably not more than a backward reading of what was then experienced. This of course is not a refutation of the whole idea, since the Church understands itself to have the power of interpretation of all such happenings in salvation history, as it is called. What, however, the Church can put over or stress in one generation or more it need not do universally. This assumption has been criticised by Peter Geach, speaking from the pew, so to say, as "impertinence" (of the clergy, I suppose). It need not be so, however, if Hegel's view of things, that no belief stands still, so to say, is correct. Every belief is on the way, in process towards, absolute knowledge. By this concept, which is *the* concept, there are no other or abstractly particularised truths whatever. So every age is left free to suit its own spiritual needs, under this commissioned Church's guidance, that of God's people elect and Christ's true body, in fact, not merely or reductively "mystical" if the mystical is the true (see *Enc.* 82, add, on the mystical as the speculative). We rightly look back on past ages and feel that *we* could not have lived in and with them and all their constraints, barbarities, perversions etc., simply because *we* are not required to do so. This circumstance, taken as the exact opposite of "realised end", in fact shows that it is true that the end is realised, that time therefore is itself false as finite, the temporal meaning the non-eternal, the phenomenal. Those before were already "there", at "realised end" (*Enc.* 210-212) as we here now hope to be already there. We should recall Hegel's well-grounded

strictures upon Kant's falsely dualistic way of taking this, ever *reintroducing* the phenomenality, e.g. of time, after once dismissing it for that very reason, that it is appearance only.

In a similar way, recalling the controversy over women priests, our initial if not chief concern in this chapter, the Church has only to stress in a new or different way the truth she holds as to "the priesthood of all believers" for this dilemma to lose much of its sting. We all minister to one another. A rethinking of sacramental theology, already offered in germ by Luther in his time, reappears on the horizon here, as a century ago Baron von Hügel had with some horror foreseen that it would. Characteristically, this universal priesthood, "of all believers", resolves itself in, as it springs from, the one eternal priesthood of Christ, "priest for ever according to the order of Melchizedek". I will not attempt to explain how this mysterious figure got into the Scripture, but the reference to an order (of priests) is typical. We speak of their being *ordained*, by higher priests or "bishops" (*episkopoi*, overlookers, those looking after), again, in "the sacrament of order", routinely supposed to give a unique power of "making" Christ present on the altar in some especial way. I suppose anyone can see that that is a finite notion. Such notions have their day only, and place, as do little dogs generally, to recall a rather touching little poem about one such. The taking of this as something other, an exclusive, quasi-magical power (such as Simon *Magus* believed the Apostles to possess and coveted, offering *money* for it) of some, abstractly absolute, is just what those Dutch Dominicans, whose declaration I discuss in an Appendix to the present chapter below, were reacting to, under pressure of practical needs. It was *such* a need (the need to placate conservative fourth century criticism), we have just indicated, which elicited a Christian theology of sacrifice (of the Mass), "this our sacrifice", in the first place. It must therefore, like everything, be considered relative to the whole system. This is Hegel's alternative to their being a "hierarchy" of absolute truths. There is one truth, in infinitely many-sided simplicity, like Nature herself, just one of those sides, a moment like all moments of the whole, being that to which she is in logical eventuality "delivered up", in general resurrection.⁵ Need or will, are in fact, Hegel's logic shows, but one step from the final precision of truth in its universality. Goodness and truth, accordingly, in Hegel's system, are not adaptations of being to faculties of will and mind in their supposed separateness but, rather, the final or

⁵ Aquinas claims, we noted, that there is no resurrection of nature apart from "the bodies of the redeemed" and their beauty. I have no wish to controvert this, having supplied no especial ground for doing so. One has but to understand the "all in all" principle of genuine system.

penultimate methodical categories of the self-alienated Idea's return to itself in an eternal circling of love, which is thought (*Enc.* 159). Truth serves life and conversely, as self, self-consciousness, is the way self itself must tread in thinking the system according to self's lights, as we say.. "If I were not God would not be and if God were not I would not be... By God, this is true" (Meister Eckhart). Scripture, in its phenomenality as letter, where it is still needed by anyone, will be found to confirm this. "I have loved you from before the foundation of the world", understood to mean that I, the you, am constitutive, as part (if it had parts) of the Idea.. Thus absolute freedom grounds necessity.

Concerning priestesses, however, I would just note that if we were to have them then they would simply be priests, along with others, and not priestesses, as there are in some churches just deacons, male or female. In that sense the problem, the subject even (in either sense perhaps) would dissolve itself, along indeed with herself and himself. The difference between homosexuals and heterosexuals, an impudent nomenclature as one might think, would equally dissolve itself along with all the bickering, in a universal love. Since this is impossible one must suppose a recall of difference in the bosom of a thud far achieved identity, never to be left behind. This, in fact, as *fons et origo*, is Trinitarianism.

*

I have emphasised here, as system, the "closed" aspect of Hegelian thought, that it continually returns one to its own centre. This is taken by many to be what characterises *ideology*. It does, but most typically as characterising the latter as a perversion of thought. In fact by Hegel's achievement one sees more clearly how and why it is a perversion, the tentacular imprisonment of which, according to Joseph Stalin's perception, can enslave the mind entirely. Just so can its true exemplar liberate the mind, just so are slavery and freedom intimately, i.e. logically, related, as Hegel showed in a masterly analysis. In referring to Hegelianism as an "enchanted wood", however, from which one could escape only with difficulty, C.S. Lewis presented it as a harmful ideology, the arch-ideology even. Perhaps it first creates the possibility of ideology, through illegitimate borrowing of its categories and method, a genuine inversion indeed. Within communist totalitarianism, from which communism as believed and practiced by many honest thinkers can in a measure be distinguished, one distinguishes from the honestly deluded ideologues, as they are still called, and the ideological masters who believe in *nothing* theoretical as themselves slaves to power over others or over social reality,

which they see as reality simply, as a whole. We thus pass from *theoria*, knowing, as the highest praxis (Aristotle) to praxis as engulfing theory as its mere servant and handmaid as philosophy itself has indeed been viewed by some of the more sacral religious ideologies, whom we have made it our business here to liberate to “the freedom in which Christ has made you free”, a content requiring for its formal perfection (as in fact *the* content), Hegel has claimed, translation into purely philosophical terms, as logically prior, these too. to its absorption into as identification with the Absolute Idea itself, which is in fact the Absolute (*Enc.* 212). In making this translation we may or may not elect to carry over into this format this or that religious name or term, “God”, “divine” and so on. Yet the key term “spirit” (*Geist*) has to be thus retained, as coming into its own, so to say. Thus Aquinas has noted that this third Trinitarian person, “spirit”, is unique in having no proper, so to say “religious”, name. One might see this as pre-indication of the Hegelian thesis.

Appendix

Dutch Dominicans on the Mass: Letter to a Friend

You have asked for my views, if I have any, on this proposal by some Dutch Dominicans. I have now read the *Tablet* report (Jurgenson, 8 Sep. 2013) and an "explanation" by one of the authors, Fr. Lascaris O.P.

My first thought was that they were simply recalling Schillebeeckx's suggestion of some years ago, censured by the guardians in Rome. A second thought, which I had had then too, was that the presentation was in some way disingenuous. Why, I thought, do they not acknowledge that this hits at the ordinary view of Catholics that the priest, in virtue of his ordination, performs a literal miracle at the altar? On this is based the whole reverence for priests and their hold upon consciences. For it does not occur to people to think that just anyone whatever might perform this or any miracle. I recall the Jesuit chaplain at my university in 1959 telling me a tale about a man who impersonated a priest and visited a convent to say mass, very beautifully. In discussion afterwards one of the nuns flatly said, "Our Lord was not present on the altar this morning." She could not say why. Such tales were the stuff of Catholic piety.

Lascaris does, however, acknowledge this in the small print, as it were, whereas Jurgenson simply reports that the Dutch episcopal conference says the proposal "appears" to conflict with the faith of the Church. When Lascaris says, though, that celebration of the eucharist is "made dependent upon" the person celebrating it, which in turn makes ordination "the most important sacrament", as if only the bishops are doing this, he still sounds disingenuous and manipulative. It makes ordination necessary within the sacramental system (as for Luther, say, it maybe was not), but not more "important" than the eucharist itself (an end to which ordination would be the necessary means merely), or baptism.

His remark about vertical Neoplatonic theology has some validity, though he neglects to mention that the idea of divine communication flowing down is equally Jewish and Old Testament. It was by a condescension, people generally think, that God appeared to Moses in the burning bush. It was not his natural habitat, even though tradition acknowledges that he is everywhere. "As for our God, he is in heaven", he came down, etc.

Lascaris quite clearly sees the language of sacrifice as negotiable, though it may be kept for traditional reasons, i.e. if the community so will. Those still venerating the sixteenth century martyrdoms for belief in "the

sacrifices of masses" are naturally disconcerted. Just so, however, were many Jews disconcerted by the indifference of the first Christians to matters for which people like the seven brothers of *Maccabees* had, it was believed, given their lives not long before.

Laying on of hands by the bishop is indeed mentioned but merely as confirming the choice of the parish community. They "should" ask the bishop to do this. One wonders why they should really, on Lascaris's principles. Surely he is just being "diplomatic", leaving a way open for those still wanting to believe that the bishop, by power within the apostolic succession, is thereby conferring an exclusive and quasi-magical power, is "ordaining" the married female homosexual or whatever. He certainly would not want to recall "the ordinary practice of the early Church" in everything, though it suits him here.

*

The booklet had said that speaking the "words of consecration" is not the exclusive right or power of the priest. There is a suggestive ambiguity here. Thus Lascaris complains that the bishops seem to object to "one group of faithful (such as these Dominicans) addressing another" except through them or with their prior approval. Power, that is, is at once juridical and "sacramental", a formerly typical Catholic attitude, which one wishes here not merely to demolish (a formerly typical Protestant attitude) but to identify as already demolished, a "dead horse".

If the dispute were simply about who had a *right* to consecrate, to celebrate, it would be sociological merely. I have called it disingenuous to pretend or try to give the impression that it is that, to pretend in fact that nobody seriously thinks there is such a thing as consecration, defined as "transubstantiation" (unless he is a bishop).

The trouble here is that the new priests, or some of them, are still behaving like some of the old priests. Coincidentally with veiling the enormity (in the eyes of "traditionalists") of the step they are taking they are still trying to mystify, to verbally intimidate, just like our apostles of "political correctness". Unease though can only be dispelled if it is openly acknowledged that what happens at the altar is no longer viewed as miraculous, whether or not it ever should have been thus regarded. This step has been taken by and large with regard to the *magnalia Dei* of *Exodus*, now most often seen as attributable to natural causes, such as the eruption at Santorini, parts of the Velikovskian scenario and so on.

This retreat from or supersession of miracle is, I think, a bigger step than has been generally realised. All is the divine action, equally, it is said

(as in J.-P. De Caussade's classic, *Self-Abandonment to Divine Providence*). So nothing is it especially. So the centre is everywhere, call this reduction or expansion indifferently. The case is similar with a man who is God. There could be another one, of whom we have not been told, far out in another galaxy, or in San Francisco (Herbert McCabe on incarnation in a *New Blackfriars* editorial some years ago). Or why not everyone, why not posit every man or person as God? Only ideas of what might or might not be fitting hold us back from the logic here (this is acknowledged by Aquinas in *Summa theol.* III, for what it may be worth). It remains of course a truth of faith that salvation is to be sought, or had, through Jesus Christ alone. It is his religion, if you like. This having of "salvation", after all, need not be equated with some efficiently causal "atonement". The sense in which "in the Cross" is life and hope is an open one. Even for the conservative C.S. Lewis, clearly perplexed by the "how" question, it was a matter of the God-man teaching us, but also helping us, how to die merely. For St. Thomas, again, one drop of the Lord's blood would have more than atoned or paid for the world's sins (as God could have otherwise delivered Israel), a picturesque way of putting satisfaction theories beneath discussion. Later, anyhow, comes the reciprocal "I in them and they in me", "members one of another", even "Greater things than I shall you do." Presupposed is a philosophy denying that "each thing is itself and not another thing". Yet "I and the Father are one." "Inasmuch as you did it to the least, you did it to me" is more a real than a merely moral identification. The (pseudo-)Athanasian "conversion of the godhead into flesh" or "taking of the manhood into God" are not the only alternatives here. There may be no flesh and no godhead, but spirit only ("and this we call God", if or as long as we will or must). If this were a general or "scientific" truth (cf. absolute idealism) it would not correspond to the ancient Docetism, which denied true flesh, unreasonably, to just one man.

A main reason for attending church, however, still more for being obliged thereto, is here taken away. This is further trouble, that we seem, abruptly, to find ourselves in the same situation as old-fashioned Protestants, with their boring Sunday rituals. The "clergyman" himself, i.e. in just this capacity, can become supremely uninteresting. It is painful for him if he grasps this. The only valid remaining reason for going to church will be that it is interesting, life-giving, where or when this may be realistically hoped. In such case the minister, priest, will be focus, representative, spokesman, of the community as such, giving themselves back to themselves with interest and presiding over ceremonies, or real banquets (material or spiritual, symposia), feasts of love. Quite clearly

though the idea of a bishop judging who makes the right host or hostess is an interim one. Those most capable of giving the party will quite soon oust the mere appointed overseer as such, however many hands have been laid upon him. This of course is the question of "who is in the continuity of the church", i.e. that principle itself, of continuity, succession, remains (even papal excommunication witnesses to the limits of hand-laying, within the realist scheme).

Philosophy, said Hegel, accomplishes, should accomplish religion, in this case Christianity, the "absolute religion", perhaps not a religion at all but "religion itself" (de Lubac), i.e. that which overcomes religion, the heavenly Jerusalem in fact, where there is no temple. That, in some sense, is where we are at. It is unfortunate that even the enlightened Herbert McCabe O.P. followed Chesterton in speaking of the shattering of the Christian movement at the Reformation. Surely this only made manifest, rather, what Renaissance or re-appropriation of goods now further opened up by Christian understanding had long before set in train, not to speak of development previous to that, development within the pages of the New Testament itself and long before, all over the world even. The later Enlightenment was continuous with that, as Maritain managed to acknowledge at the same time as he would belittle Luther (and Descartes and Rousseau into the bargain). Democracy, or the threefold revolutionary slogan, he affirmed, was a fruit of the Gospel.¹ In the end, indeed, there is no such thing as a "layman", absolutely speaking. Christians are a "nation of priests" (perhaps as each and all offering all to each and all) as Porphyry called the Jews a "nation of philosophers".

The need, sociological or more than so, for "rites of passage" would seem to remain, while I think that the ones we have are as good as we can ever have. That is, they admit of the interpretations offered above. I agree then with our Dutchmen there and I write as a Catholic. *Honi soit* and so on! I became a Catholic when I was twenty. Whether I needed to or even should have done so I see as a non-question and am glad of all that has happened, believing that even negative things are there to be "redeemed".

Regarding the Real Presence, I once asked the local auxiliary Bishop, visiting me at home in Stockholm, if he agreed that the framers of the new Roman Catechism had almost studiously avoided referring to any moment of the Mass at which Christ became sacramentally present. He did agree. The view, he said, was rather that the whole liturgical action made Christ present. Well, there is the ancient *epiclesis* or prayer to the Holy Spirit begging that He will become thus present, as is stressed in Schillebeeckx's paraphrasing of the canon prayer at the end of his book *Christ*. He also there refers faith in the Real Presence to the words "Where two or three

are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." We often miss that this might (as well) mean I am there just in your being there, i.e. not as an invisible fourth. This of course is a (philosophical) question about the I, or about the ambiguity of "self". I am that. One can become or have the other as other. We maybe begin to need new categories here.

Thus transubstantiation, if one starts from an "absolute idealist" position, no longer occupies the itself ambiguous position of an in principle unperceivable but real miracle. We might even say it itself states the possibility of identity in difference upon which idealist, say Hegelian, philosophy rests, as well as do many Gospel texts for once taken literally. It is, so to say, an inspired pointer in that direction from the Tridentine and Thomist past, showing how it itself may only be preserved by being superseded, as part of the supersession of miracles generally. Everything is miraculous, as even Gilson taught, *quasi veritate coactus*.

If, taught by Trinitarian speculation, we abandon a philosophy of substance in favour of a philosophy of personal relations, of persons as relations in mutually positing perception, say, then bread, as itself mere appearance and symbol, is delivered from being focus of this discussion. This is no stranger than, say, Vonier's idea that a sign can itself be what it signifies (Abbot Ansgar Vonier, *A Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist*). This also is thou...

1 Compare his *Three Reformers* with his *Christianity and Democracy* (1944).

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CREATION, IDEALISM, THEOLOGY

In what is called a "Scholastic tag" the orthodox Judaeo-Christian view of creation was once summarised as "more beings but not more being", *plura entia sed non plus entis*. This does not escape the reproach of being but a representation; reproach, because it is the continual or self-constitutive effort which is theology to rise above representation. It is of course a representation as representing God, the infinite, as an abstract quantity of one taken as a number, the usual error when one talks loosely of "monotheism" as absolute truth, as applies equally to talk of "the existence of God" as equivalent to *utrum Deus sit*, whether God is, which again is not equivalent to asking whether there is a god. Thus after identifying the absolute Idea with God Hegel has not yet taken the step, as he does at the end of the Logic, of affirming that the Idea, that God, is being and uniquely or absolutely so. It is not a question, however, in philosophy, of "adopting a preliminary popular conception of God" as an "assumed standard" (*Enc.* 50), as we do, he in effect shows, when we argue for God's existence from finite things after the following pattern: since all existing things are caused something existing is not caused. The "ontological argument" does not do this but rather rebuts any attempt to deny the God there assumed. Thus Aquinas was in a sense right to claim that it is not in fact an argument. Still, Hegel says, it is not advisable to talk of God in philosophy without more ado, for fear of confusion with the popular conception. This, though, is esoteric and hence theology has ever striven, as did Anselm, Aquinas or, indeed, Plato, though not rhetorically merely, to render the general conception of God or of the gods more adequate. This was the dilemma of Israel, caught between their teacher and leader Moses and the surrounding populist polytheism. So today genuinely democratic politicians must ever warn others and guard themselves against "populism".

So, as Hegel puts it, the word "God", "by itself... a meaningless sound", only anticipates the Absolute as Subject. Thus far it is "not really affirmed", even. Yet until it is affirmed we have "the instinctive feeling that in such a conception (sc. Spinoza's, of God as Substance only) self-

consciousness was simply submerged, and not preserved" (*The Phenomenology of Mind*, Baillie p.80, minus the parenthesis). "In my view", Hegel writes, "everything depends on grasping and expressing the ultimate truth not as Substance but as Subject as well." This Subject, as ultimate truth (he has just said), "is the whole... the essential nature reaching its completeness through the process of its own development". He further interprets this as its ever reaching it in Trinitarian process. I take "process", again (*Vorgang*), as one with the classic *processio* of the Trinitarian theologians or as implying no reference to time, a finite concept. Hegel may nonetheless be leaving this open just here. Yet note that he says here that the Absolute is a result, not that it results or has a result. Its method, which it is ("I am the way"), is not temporal. From this (p.82) Hegel goes on to remark on the essential finitude of language, of putting into words "like that" (what words are not like it?), inevitably giving "appearance of contradiction". So the truth must not, cannot, "be barely stated" but "set forth as the process of reflectively mediating itself with itself". We only "begin with the word God" and hence dispense with it without losing the conception, the Idea, I take him as saying here (and everywhere). Hegel concludes that knowledge is only really itself, as science, "in the form of system". Any abstractly fundamental principle, stated alone, is hence false because simply first only. Yet the Idea, his logic teaches, is true as one with the method of the whole, as the Trinity is one with Trinitarian process, the Word with its proceeding since, finally, Spirit is process, "blowing where it will", the freedom of the Idea as free, essentially, of finite content or positivity, as not a being nor any kind of being and this alone is the true being, in which all other instances have their being. This "appearance of contradiction" is the fault and/or essence of language, Hegel's philosophy in general teaches, as final outcome of contextual theory, one might say.

For one knows that "speech and writing" themselves are representational forms such that the Idea transcends them freedom from determination. This freedom is the necessity that is called or named, though with exquisite inconsistency, since naming is itself representation, spirit (*Geist*). Thus this name too is bestowed by analogy with our breathing or the wind blowing, while the Trinitarian Spirit is said, in the Latin, to be "spirated", recalling at once our re-spiration (as against its own all-inclusive once and always). Regarding which of any such pairs is finally analogical with its other (one speaks of *analogans* and *analogatum*), we often seem either to get things back to front or to find, as with Hegel's analysis of cause and effect, notions intrinsic to classical analogy-theory, as in "like causes like", a final reciprocity. This, surely, is why he dilates so approvingly

upon the artificiality, the arbitrariness even, of linguistic signs and of linguistic signification as such (*Enc.* 458-459). This view is itself analogical, in fact, to the use some make of the formula “made out of nothing” in order to establish as arbitrary, again, divine choice, a form of the late medieval “liberty of indifference” as it was applied to interpret free choice (*arbitrium*) of “the will”. Thus we create language out of our battery of naturally possible sounds as God creates a world in accordance with his infinite nature or with being. Yet it is human language, like humans themselves, which is and are, by analogy, taken from divine things, from the Absolute Idea, better said. This Idea is the freedom to which only logic or mind, itself spirit, in a process of logical but just therefore self-transcending method (the true self-consciousness), attains. So, whether for Aquinas or Hegel, will, “Volition”, the category, follows upon (*sequitur*) *intellectus* or “Cognition Proper”, being thus itself, in Hegel at least, a part, a moment, of logic. Thus we ceaselessly search for etymological origins of language in the non-linguistic (it is yet language’s *own* other) or very first system of signs, a search terminating in the final analogy of utterance, the incipient or eternal Word, with the one uttering, of effect with cause, of passion with action, of gerundive with gerund. The natural, we may say, is the first instance of the artificial, and this is what makes nature reasonable or liable to, as fit for, logico-rational investigation. Any verb, therefore, may de-pose its abstractly active character, turn “deponent” in (grammatical) form simply because action and choice are finite, because, more fundamentally, action and passion, as choice and being chosen, knowing and being known, are the same. This is the stuff of the “prayer of St. Francis” with its string of equivalences of opposites: in knowing I am known and the rest. Here, too, Hegel identifies form and matter in their inherently mutual opposition, as he does being and nothing. Thus there is no abstract nothing out of which beings are “made” and the first pair of the logic is not, after all, logically different from those succeeding. The “poorest” category issues in, is one with, the richest and freest, therefore, in a mutual dependence of result. Thus true freedom emerges finally, and can only thus emerge, in logic as the negative freedom (which is the most positive) not to be determined, as the Idea of ideas, which as such is precisely the beginning “founding” all thought, while remaining system as such. “You would not seek me if you had not already found me”. Hegel thus explicitly identifies mystical theology and logic, as what the latter, as he presents it, “used to be called”. This implies that the mystics did know what they were talking about. Hence we find the two, mysticism and thought, united, identified rather, in Plato, “fanciful” therefore (*sic* Hume) in the most positive sense. We as

finite need here the lesser good, the false, so as to aspire to the highest, the true, which in this way, Hegel teaches, results from it, as silence, again, presupposes speech. Thus Hegel's and others' philosophical leavings, like my writing this today, like today itself, are mere presupposition or fodder for "ungrateful spirit".

It is with this in mind, in regard to his theology and philosophy indifferently, that Hegel writes of "the necessity of the absolute picture-idea". It is indifferent because Hegel systematically rejects any final twofold order of truth, a position consistent with and not destructive of or divorcing itself from traditional wisdom. The same outlook is implicit in the dictum, a bit more now than a "tag", of a luminary of the twelfth century school of St. Victor: *Jesus Christus, solutio omnium quaestionum*. Jesus as the Christ is the answer to, the loosing of, all questionings (or seekings). In saying this one asserts, against defective readings from left and right, that Hegel's theology is not reductive, that his philosophy is itself the full flowering of theology as at that time. For we have always to go further. Thus Hegel reaffirms the Aristotelian position that metaphysics is the fulfilment of physics as of philosophy of nature, nothing more, and that metaphysics is itself perfected in theology or the doctrine of God, of *nous*. *Theologia* is Aristotle's own, Greek word for this. It is in this sense that Aristotle represents intellect as "coming from outside" the system of nature (in *De partibus animalium*).

The position is yet clearer, if anything, in Plato's development, again, both philosophies arriving at a "form of forms"¹. The final expression of this is Plato's representation of Socrates, his ideal figure, as receiving the Oracular and hence ideal formulation of mind's act, as addressed to (his or anyone's) mind: "Know yourself". This aspect is at the forefront of Hegel's thought and he accordingly cites the story with intent, his thesis being that Substance is Subject. Thus the Cartesian Spinozist doctrine of the one Substance is not rejected but taken as the error from which truth immediately arises (as result). We might call this a universal and hence de-finitised solipsism, the concept, that is to say, of this the Idea as "representing" it, the de-natured solipsism, namely! This, the Hegelian "absolute picture-idea", which is only erroneously reducible to credal statements of particular belief, may be related to but by no means identified with the early Wittgensteinian "picture-theory of meaning". It is just what that is not. The elements of a proposition precisely do not correspond to what is meant, always for Hegel being itself as the Idea, to which, rather, the concept and not the proposition or *enuntiatio*, still less,

¹ Cp. F. Inciarte: *Forma Formarum*, Verlag Karl Alber, Freiburg(Munich, 1970.

comes closest this side of direct perception in and as identity, “absolute knowledge” namely.

So what Hegel “breaks with” is not theology but a *realist* theology, in the epistemological sense, or as the term “realist” was used in the originally scholastic controversy about “universals”. To be precise, it is what was called moderate realism that he breaks with as, *a fortiori*, also with attempts, from the more philistine representatives of orthodoxy, to claim that “we are all moderate realists really”². Moderate realists, in what is accordingly called the “vulgar” reception of Aristotelianism, though one may naturally question this³, tend to take their stand, with Thomas Aquinas, on Aristotle’s saying that universals exist differently, *alio modo*, in the mind to how they are found in things. It is this dualism that monism principally resolves, except in the sense we have just noted above, of the concept or of language as “representing” the Idea. The Scholastic universal, after all, as abstract, is not the Idea. Conversely, what was then called Platonic realism (of universals) is not a realism of abstractions but, rather, a rejection of such abstractions in favour of “the concrete universal”. This is made explicit in Hegel, for whom the logical forms are “the form of the world”.

It is, however, the notion of “things”, of the *res*, which idealism calls in question, as it is effectively called in question even by Kant’s last ditch supposition of a strictly unknowable “thing in itself”, which Hegel was to dismiss as a self-contradictory postulate of pretended knowledge. An earlier idealism, namely Plato’s, again, had equally questioned “things” as claiming, in medieval Latin interpretation at least, that only universals, the “forms” of things, are real, and not the supposed plurality of “things” as sensuously or otherwise represented. “Thing” (along with “Ex-istence”) was finally to be categorised as a mere moment of thought in Hegel’s “science of logic”. To this extent Platonic realism coincides with absolute idealism.

Church leaders and theologians at times attempted to represent Platonic realism as heresy but the onus remained on them to prove it. The Christian representation may well be represented as an advance of thought (or of belief indifferently) and I would agree with Hegel in thus representing it. Nonetheless we find a movement among today’s theologians to reinstate the Platonic ideas of emanation from the Good, from the *bonum diffusivum*

² A phrase I once heard mockingly uttered by a younger Alasdair MacIntyre during a Wittgenstein seminar at Leeds University, c.1960.

³ Cp. F. Inciarte’s title to one of his articles: “How Vulgar is Vulgar Aristotelianism?”

sui, once supposed to have gone out with Proclus⁴, as marked by Justinian's closing of Plato's academy at Athens. After this the philosophers tended to be treated as a defunct class or type, not part of theology as developing a revelation from above, "from outside" in a now twofold sense, not as of mere spirit, that is, but of "supernatural" or infinite spirit. It is significant here that Aristotle consistently resisted talk of minds in contrast to mind, like Anaxagoras before him. Mind "sets all in order", the latter claimed, using the present perfect tense of "realised end"⁵. Implicit here is that any thinking done anywhere is not abstractly done by someone else, so to say, or by anything other than mind itself. This, in fact, is merely the assumption grounding logic. "The devils believe and tremble". Summarising this outlook Hegel, not without precedent, finds he must include the false and evil as a part, even if transient or "sham" (*Enc.* 35), of the true and the good, remarking that it is "hard" to conceive that "there is evil in God". By this he of course means to remove the sting of absolute evil, from the moment of concrete evil. There cannot be an absolute evil or, as even Aquinas put it, *malum est semper in subjecto*, i.e. as implicit, *in subjecto bono*. "Offences must come". "Good and evil are the same", Hegel adds (in *The Phenomenology of Mind*, VII, C, while all judgment is false as abstractly separating them. Whether this makes Blake's "Marriage of Heaven and Hell" truer than C.S. Lewis's *The Great Divorce* I leave open, merely remarking that if good and evil are the same then so, *a fortiori*, are marriage and divorce. I love you in leaving you, as we say, or, as another effectively shall have said, if I go not away the spirit ("my" spirit is clearly meant) cannot come to you (the opposite of going away), meaning that the same I would not then be "in you", as it shall. Removal is put as presence, something picked up by Hegel when he writes: "the moments as much are as they are not, - are only the process which is Spirit".

This, then, is that Platonic Idea, which, Hegel says, is one with philosophy itself. The Idea is, finally, being, as we read at the end of the Greater Logic, one with that "inchoate, pretended" or "logical" notion of it with which the "science of logic" begins, i.e. logic begins with "the notion implicit" only. The world, is nothing, "dust and ashes", a "that by which",

⁴ Cf. David Burrell CSC: "Aquinas's Appropriation of *Liber de causis* to Articulate the Creator as Cause of Being" in *Contemplating Aquinas* (ed. Fergus Kerr OP), UND Press, Notre Dame, 2006 and SCM Press, London 2003.

⁵ Compare the *tetelestai*, reduplicative perfect form of the verb formed from *telos*, end, posited as a Johannine "last word from the Cross" and meaning "It is finished" in the sense of "it has been accomplished", i.e. the whole work has, or ended. This either originates or exemplifies Hegel's "realised end".

an essentially “formal” or absolute sign⁶, therefore, only to be seen through, as with a mirror’s surface or a retinal image in consequence, though these can indeed be seen by a second or different intention, as the world cannot. Or, we could say, it can, this second intention being the comparatively esoteric finite sciences. In this sense all these visible things, objects rather, are essentially invisible, unknowable, momentary. In knowing them you push them aside. This is the truth of the “veil of perception”⁷, not meaning now the intuitive or spiritual perception of one person, one mind, by another as the latter’s own self-constitution, whether actively or passively indifferently, but the primitive perception of sense, of seeming to see. The “veil” is on the part of the (non-)object. We, as personal, however, beget one another continuously, I would contend⁸, as the first person or Father utters his word and is that uttering. The word, that is, is act, Goethe’s *der Tat*, and therefore nothing written down or spoken.

What the world expresses, in Hegelian terms, is the necessity of mediation. God himself knows nature immediately, as he knows us, but as an idea, as ideas, each identical with himself and hence one with the Idea as its moment, one of many coalescing in one, as “He that has seen me has seen the Father”. In terms of the Hegelian logic each one becomes the appointed Mediator but by a union with that sole or, in theological picturing, “appointed” mediator generative of us all, of each of us. This individual is at once the universal and universal of universals in primal subjectivity, “solution of all questions”, again (see above). Why or how is this so? Has he, or his (the) “spirit”, really seized, filled, the whole world? Or how could this have been claimed, as it was, from the very beginning, as the sons of Abraham and Isaac proclaimed themselves chosen, and there too only one of them, foreshadowing the absolute remnant of Israel in one person which is Christ? The filling of the whole world can have nothing to do with quantity or with extension, it seems, if we should follow this tradition. It is, this too, the Idea. The very first step contains all the rest, as it is the essence of faith to do.

⁶ I refer here to a notion, that of concepts as “formal signs”, most fully developed historically in Jean Poincot’s semiotic (cp. John Deely, *Introducing Semiotic*, Bloomington 1982).

⁷ This idea, of a “veil of perceptions”, is discussed in Jonathan Bennett’s studies of Kant, principally.

⁸ See my “Begotten not Made”, *The Downside Review*, (Bath, UK), January 2006, pp.1-20, a version of which forms the first chapter of my *Hegel’s Philosophy of Universal Reconciliation*, Cambridge Scholars, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 2013.

CHAPTER TWELVE

GOOD AND EVIL

In stating that “good and evil are the same” or, more particularly, that “there is evil in God” Hegel can appear to find himself at an opposite pole to what he calls “the metaphysics of the past”, a category, of course, to which his own thought “now” belongs. “At the same time”, however, we must in fairness recognise that he himself, that is to say these his own metaphysics, recognise(s), the finite illusoriness of time, of these “tenses” of past, present and future. That is to say that there must be a sense, for him as for us, in which past thought, *qua* or insofar as it is thought, is not past at all. It is in this sense that he speaks, in *The Phenomenology of Mind*, of the being of Christ, just as much as that of “sense existence” in general examined at the beginning of that book, the first part, he says, of his “system”, as a being that “passes over into His having being”, a process itself expressed in the present tense, it “passes over”, as used to express, as standing for”, the freedom from time and decay of the Concept. His picture for this is a timeless pantheon, through which one may successively wander, of the line of philosophers, each containing in his (her) fashion all the others, only the whole perfectly expressing each one, Hegel included. So each one “comes not to destroy but to fulfil”, so that “not one jot or one tittle”, of the Law as of tradition philosophical, theological or other, shall pass away or have its significance destroyed. A plain principle of “mystical” (his own term) or speculative interpretation is implied and employed. It is in fact the principle of faith-informed Bible-reading. In what, then, does Hegel have faith?

Accordingly we find that also Hegel’s account of good and evil does not stand free from this tradition, is not “reactionary” in the sense that he finds Jacobi’s thought on this and related subjects to be. In reading this, and so much else of Hegel, one cannot escape, though one might wish to ignore, a strong impression of the pervading influence and/or direction of this Biblical culture, most of all apparent, perhaps in his plain coupling of evil with knowledge. What we call fallen man, if we do, is man that “has become like us” (*viz.* the divine), in knowing both good and evil. It is indeed a principle, as argued thesis, of Hegelian thought, that one anyhow

cannot know one without the other: as “innocent” the first pair could know neither of these, properly speaking¹. Here too he plainly applies the old Socratic principle that the subject thinking, mind, becomes what it knows. Therefore, the next step, that “there is evil in God”, as we ought to recognise. This evil, however, according to Hegel, straightaway, as one of “the earliest” manifestations of thought, becomes externalised in the angelic figure of Satan, “son of the morning” or “light-bearer” (Latin *Lucifer*). As such, though, he is cast out, or retained, replaced by, yet identified with, another angelic figure, Christ, who represents, “stands for” (*supponit pro*) the good (as a word might do²) under the form of the divine and simple Being. Insofar, moreover, as Hegel more than hints at the identity, speculative indeed, of these two “figures” he will clearly have had in mind the Pauline and Biblical affirmation that Christ was “made sin for us”, a curse even. This view of things is made, in Paul but also, *mutatis mutandis*, in Hegel, a basis for a more general “bringing to nought of the things which are”, of the immediate and finite, of a general transformation

¹ See Hegel’s exegesis (at *Enc.* 24 add., in the 1827 version) of the Gospel text stipulating the need for becoming as little children. He stresses the “as”, namely, adding that childlike innocence fascinates “only because it reminds us of what spirit must win for itself” or “become”.

² This “supposition theory” is in accordance with Aristotelian realism, as expressed in a less than justly celebrated passage in *Topics*, where the reason given for language, for words, is that we cannot get the things themselves into our heads, into mind. Here words are treated as things that “stand for” other things, Aristotle abstracting from or neglecting the need for ideas and thus preparing the ground for late medieval nominalism. So for Hegelian idealism too words are as merely phenomenal as any other “things” or objects. As John Deely points out, if there are things “in the world” used to refer to other things, thus acquiring the property R, then “there are beings which possess this (acquired) property R by nature, in association with which linguistic or other signs take or borrow the property R” (John Deely: “How Language Refers”, *Studie Internazionali di Filosofia*, autumn 1972). For Hegel, however, there are only the ideas, within the Absolute Idea where any idea thus “stands for” any other as shared “moment” of the Idea, truth thus “standing for” itself only. Only this transcendence of linguistic referral (while representing this transcendence within linguistic or thereby “false” judgments, naturally) resolves the paradoxes of Thomism and earlier thought generally. Like the French Revolutionary political idealism this philosophical or absolute idealism is a late development of the seed sown by the Christian Gospel, entirely within philosophy, within the true or divinely absolute world of mind or spirit, however. Philosophy though must supplant/ the world (cp. “I pray not for the world...”). This is what all science, all “progress”, gropes after. The alienation of nature from its own idea has to be overcome in order to be what it is., for the Idea (God) to be “all in all”.

of being into essence in progress to the final Concept. This final concept, moreover, is “the truth of things”, that the end is, as such or *qua* end, in the true world of thought, accomplished as “having been”, again, realised. Here too Hegel would be thinking of the final “word from the Cross”, *tetelestai*, perfect tense, meaning literally “it has now been finished or accomplished”.

Accordingly Hegel pursues with some intensity the sense in which knowledge is evil as being, necessarily or of itself, knowledge of evil, to which man must grow by natural maturation (actualisation) of his natural powers. This leads Hegel to present, deliberately, evil, as being knowledge, as itself good or a kind of good. Good and evil are hence the same, he says. This though we must with equal energy deny, he adds, as “unspiritual”, though quite why we must do this he does not say: he might rather seem to be finding it the most spiritual insight of all. For, or nonetheless, he goes on to give an account of knowledge in terms of which its evil may be understood, understood even or nonetheless as itself a good. knowledge, in a centring of the subject into itself, into the I or ego and thus, *as it were*, away from God in his simple Being (as, for Hegel, absolute subjectivity). There is a plain and most intimate relation between this self-centring, reckoned as at least *prima facie* evil, and self-consciousness, on his account of the latter, whereby indeed we do indeed become identical with God or, we might legitimately deduce, “have the mind of Christ” (St. Paul again). In all of this certain parallels with a later thinker, Friedrich Nietzsche, become apparent (see Nietzsche’s essay on Paul the Apostle as “the first Christian”, in *Daybreak*, 1881).

These views are later energetically advanced in Hegel’s astonishing interpretation of the myth, as, in harmony with Biblical theology generally, he plainly views it, of the “fall” of man as recounted at the beginning of *Genesis* or the first of the five “books of Moses”. This, at *Enc.* 24, is presented as part of an addition whose main subject, which this “legend” illustrates, is not man’s fall at all but, rather, the “natural” disunion of the spirit (in itself rather than in “man” merely) with nature, which “does nothing wicked”, as thus merely instancing “the wonderful division of the spirit against itself”, which brings us back, with a certain persistence, to the “evil in God”, who “is spirit” (the “lesson of Christianity”). What we have is man’s “growing up”, simply, a maturation, however, itself having this spiritual component, an “ungrateful spirit” which will refuse to recognise its own apparent beginnings in “nature”, as that which has “put away childish things”. Spirit, so to say, has its being “beyond the future”, this being Hegel’s account of faith, whereby we indeed “sit with Christ in the heavenly places” (St. Paul), overcoming the

disunity between “now” and “then” as typifying the consciousness of those making up the believing community although nonetheless, Hegel intimates, they are not in their respective abstract individualities to be equated with that community as a substantial whole, which does indeed “grasp the notion” in its truth, or so he seems to say (in the chapter on “revealed religion” in *The Phenomenology of Mind*):

Pictorial presentation constitutes the characteristic form in which spirit is conscious of itself in this its religious communion. The form is not yet the self-consciousness of spirit which has reached its notion as notion... spiritual life is still cumbered with an unreconciled diremption into a “here” and a “beyond”... The consciousness of the religious communion, on the other hand, possesses the content as its substance, just as the content is the certainty the communion has of its own spirit. (*Phenomenology of Mind*, tr. Baillie, pp. 763-766).

There is a bit of a mystery here, as of having and eating the cake in one, as we say. This characterises Hegel’s philosophy as a whole, however, grounding itself in Logic, whereby “all judgments are false” as “one-sided” (though including, therefore, this one, this very meta-judgment, so to say). We have here, all the same, an entirely Catholic or Orthodox ecclesiology (as one would expect of this orthodox Lutheran) as it is found in those called “the mystics”, with whom Hegel consciously aligns himself but for whom speech, or dogma, is silver, silence, like the substance or content, golden. Hegel’s mind is that of John “of the Cross”³, for whom “God has spoken only one word” (and who actually uses this proverb, of silver and gold, well-known to English speakers or readers), thus indicating agreement with the speculative thesis that “all judgments are false”. John even, or also, tells his contemplative nuns that they, at a certain point, are “meant to cease all thinking” (this was misinterpreted as “quietism”) in a way clearly recalling Hegel’s account of “self-consciousness”, perfected in death, “spirit’s destiny and necessity” where Time as it were “creeps over” itself, to develop a hint of Hegel’s (Baillie, p.800f.). “I shall not die but live”, exclaimed the warrior king, and this has been taken by later times as mystical definition of such dying (in or out of battle) itself. On such themes, we all know, Hegel maintains a loud silence, on which I shall not comment. McTaggart may be consulted.

³ In this connection one may note his otherwise slightly odd mention, of “Spanish poetry” in the *Encyclopaedia* (“Science of Logic”), to which this mystical doctor substantially contributed (before commenting at length theologically on his own poems).

What emerges is that “man” both is and is not a phenomenon (I am not referring directly to Teilhard de Chardin’s titular use of this epithet), inasmuch as man emerges, even in his idea, from nature, but emerges as no longer thus emerging (“no birth, no death”: Buddhist tag). The philosophic consciousness, namely, can question, whether in Descartes or Newman, whether, as subjective being, it “has hands or feet”, while, it should be noticed, Hegel’s answer to this doubt is that he, or mind, really has not such appendages or an “abstract” body in general. Against Jacobi and Descartes, who appeal to the goodness of God in validation of our immediate “certainties”, he maintains, of “sense-consciousness”:

To have such a thing is the slightest of all cognitions; and the only thing worth knowing about it is that such immediate knowledge of the being of things external is error and delusion, that the sensible world as such is altogether devoid of truth; that the being of these external things is accidental and passes away as a show; and that their very nature is to have only an existence which is separable from their essence and notion. (*Enc.* 76)

Hence it could be and is said, by Hegel as by Aquinas, that God himself has no (knowledge-) relation to such things, any more than he has to an ephemeral cloud of midges (celebrated by the schoolteacher). So for us too it, such “knowledge”, is no part of “absolute knowledge”, of “knowing as I am known”, a knowledge in which, all the same, all “moments” are included as such and are thus known only within or under that “absolute” denomination of what is “closer than self to self” (what it knows of the contingent, of midges or sparrows is that they are *penitus nihil*, each conscious subject having “more value”, it too, than “many” of them, to use the evangelical picture. Implied, however, is the unconditioned value of self-consciousness only as within, as “taken up” into, subjectivity as universal, only, in one word, as spirit, *Geist*, as is true also of “the body” itself). “Philosophy leaves everything as it is” - or is not, rather.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

HEGEL'S THEOLOGY

It is important to notice that Hegel says the Absolute Idea holds all determination (*alle Bestimmtheit*) within it and not merely all determinations (*Bestimmtheiten*) though this will then be true too. As not abstractly individual but just in its individuality the universal of universals, since it is of necessity infinite, the Idea, knows and actively thinks all possibility and every possibility, the first of which is possibility itself. Since it is itself Idea this includes its own realisation. Therefore it is that there are self-determinations also, but of infinite character, within or as constituting the Idea itself. These possibilities are, just as such, strictly necessary. Yet this, however, is true also of all the finite possibilities, while the greatest necessity lies in the Idea's choice as necessarily absolute choice. That is, freedom is the ultimate necessity. Hence we ourselves, as finite subjects, are never more free than when we reason to necessary conclusions, in theory. At the same time our free actions, as conclusions of practical syllogisms, are absolutely necessary, determined in the free and executing knowledge, which is love, of the Absolute, of the active Idea.

So Hegel says, the Idea determines itself to differing formations, to Nature and Spirit namely. One may wish to speak here of Hegel's Trinitarian philosophy, not however in the sense of following a dogmatic declaration as extrinsic guide to thinking. Rather, the process of thought reflects back upon the dogma and clarifies or even "purges" it. In this sense the philosophy of religion is itself theology, as Aristotle for example understood it.

Theology as we have it is a finite development within the Church which arose at a particular time after the beginning. Hence it differs from Scripture, even though Scripture may contain theological reasoning. Paul's or John's thought may fairly be classed, therefore, as philosophy. The same may be said of Augustine's, even if he introduces the notion of *regula fidei*, the rule of faith. For this concept is open to philosophical treatment like any other. It may be referred, for example, either to the existential situation of the thinking subject or to beliefs he is required to confess. The typical Jewish ideas may thus fairly be called philosophical,

as Porphyry saw. He called the Jews "a nation of philosophers". So the Pauline category of wisdom from on high is a philosophical category, finally to be classed by Hegel as within the subject as and because all is "within" the Idea. This "within" is figure for an identity of being ultimately transcending language. Language stops at the paradox, "This also is thou, neither is this thou", said of anything whatever, even a given Trinitarian person, - for example, in Hegel's thought, God the Father as only "realised" in his Son or in Nature, his other. Theologically one speaks of the ideas of all things as "contained" in the Word.

The philosophy so redounds upon the theology that the category of revelation is freed from its taint of legalistic or extrinsic finitude. Trinity, again, is freed from suggestion of a positivistic and finite adhesion to a particular numeral, three. Rather, this threeness is referred to a necessary logical triadicity as condition for passing to new knowledge, or for newness or process as such. The mathematical analogue of this is that two things equal to a third thing are equal to one another.

Not only, however, is the *trinitas* or threeness of Trinity thus saved. It is emphasised that the threeness is of a type able to pass on to any amount of numerical ideas whatever, this being used to show that the first threeness is not quantitative since, as we know whether by our belief or from previous speculation, there are not three gods but one, the Idea, necessarily in logic. *Numeri non ponuntur in divinis* (Aquinas) and Hegel concurs, saying "It is useless to count" and accordingly going on without hindrance to postulate Satan as a fourth "Trinitarian" person, as Jung had postulated the Virgin Mary, though without preserving triadicity, which he regarded as "bad". A fifth one proposed turns out to be some angel or other. In fact Hegel assimilates the angelic "host" to the divine persons, in true Biblical fashion. In the Bible, namely, "the angel of the Lord", or in one case three angels (visiting Abraham), are very often, or always in tendency, assimilable to God himself, who in truth need send no messengers (*angeloi*) who are not themselves the message or Word.

Hegel points out that Satan is or was "Son of the Morning", Lucifer, before becoming, in story, the principle of evil. This in itself means that Good is the principle of Evil, he implies, as Evil could have no other origin. This is the height of consistency as of religious or pious insight and Hegel has nothing but praise for Boehme's tortured attempts to represent this relation of Good, of God, that is, to Evil, rather than representing the infinite as finitely beleaguered by evil or even in cahoots with it. The very notion, rather, is abstracted from good by way of pure negation. Yet there is no good without evil as there is no man without woman or woman without man. More importantly, there is, necessarily, no evil without good,

no *culpa* that is not *felix*. When Augustine made this remark (*o felix culpa*) he imagined a contrast with a *culpa infelix*, yet the deeper truth is that *culpa* is as such *felix* in being part of the scheme of things or a constituent of the Idea, thus far, logic finds, or, ultimately, one with it. Scripture reflects this in Job's exclamation, "Have we received good at the Lord's hands and shall we not receive evil", from the same source, namely.

C: PHILOSOPHICAL

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

NIETZSCHE ON GOOD AND EVIL

Nietzsche wrote of a beyond to good and evil. Part of my purpose here will be to show how this is heralded in the thought of Hegel while, in this same Hegel, it is presented, this beyond, as an insight rooted in theology or, more generally, metaphysics. The final account of these things is given in Hegel's "Mind Objective" section of his *Encyclopaedia*. It is thus later than that given in the 1821 *Philosophy of Right*, to which J.N. Findlay takes such exception¹ and so it helps us to situate things in broader perspective.

Thus *Sittlichkeit* is not at all intended as the dialectical perfection of morality. It is, rather, substituted for it after Hegel has totally discredited morality by finding conscientiousness equivalent to wickedness, or goodness. That is, one can choose, as was established in *The Phenomenology of Mind* when discussing Satan/Lucifer among other things. Yet Findlay, somewhat prissily, finds this "scandalous", as if, suddenly, he had never read or studied Hegel's *Science of Logic*.

What Hegel says, in effect, is that moralism is bogus. Nonetheless, in the phenomenal world of social and political matter we, in our own phenomenal or, to cite the poet, "sweating", not to say Sisyphean, selves, need guidelines and these are best supplied by the customs of one's society. This is not a backdown from "the moral point of view" to conventionalism but a recognition of the failure of *The Metaphysics of Morals* (Kant) within his own system of Absolute Idealism, monist where Kant's was dualist. Moral truths are inherently abstract and one-sided, at least in their application. The thought is not new, not revolutionary, but comes, it too, "to fulfil".

Aristotle had said much the same concerning morality. Accordingly he treated this phenomenon as one mediating a true doctrine of the virtues. Hegel, for his part, mentions the virtues here but without emphasis, clearly

¹ J.N. Findlay, *The Philosophy of Hegel*, Collier Books, New York, 1958 (1966), pp. 323f..

under Kantian and eighteenth century influence generally, that of the breakdown of ethical discourse to which MacIntyre refers. The virtues, Aristotelian and Thomist thought claims, are the habits needed to for one's life to flourish and even or ultimately to enter into the life of the spirit. Thus the philosopher, Aristotle claims, needs detachment from all else, the temperance and fortitude of general mortification, *athanatizein*, in order to enjoy that "a little of which is worth more than all the rest", viz. contemplation and/or study.

Also for Aquinas there is no specifically "good", in the sense of moral, motive. The tradition, he claims, merely called morals and virtue the "honourable" good, as distinct from the Good as such, which all seek, because those honourable goods mark out the path to this absolute and sole Good. So we read in the Gospel: "Why do you call me good? There is none good but God". Hegel follows or acquiesces in this pointer in declaring all to be evil that is abstractly finite or not seen as "in" God. By this, we may note, it would follow that much of what we call evil has no extra-mental or objective, non-abstract existence. Aquinas approaches this in judging evil a *privatio boni* "merely". *Malum est semper in subjecto*. Yet Hegel gives this an extendedly negative sense over that of Aquinas. Only abstract thinking, for either thinker, can talk of "radical evil" (Hannah Arendt) at all. The evil of the finite, as extreme example perhaps, is consequent upon the finite's radical rooted in the goodness that is God. Evil, that is, dependent upon, as contained in even, the good, the Idea.

This passage does not work so smoothly for Hegel, however, as it does for Aquinas, since it is not clear at all that he identifies being (the Idea) with the good, as in the old doctrine of the transcendental predicates. The latter, the good, is rather, in Hegel's system, a *penultimate* stage in the logico-metaphysical ascent to the Absolute Idea. Of course the good is "identical in difference" (cp. "relative identity" in recent Anglophone discussions) with the Idea, as is any and every other category², which are all thus "not good enough" and so have to be passed over, *aufgehoben*. It is a matter, rather, of showing that Absolute Knowledge is indeed infinite, not exclusive of good since itself, as infinite, necessarily the highest good. In this sense, however, good is totally absorbed in being as not only first but also last category in the shape of the Idea. Good, that is, does not stand its ground, is not found in heaven, so to say. So, "let your yea be yea": anything else comes of the Evil One.

² Compare Aquinas saying that any and every divine idea must be identical with the divine essence, for Hegel the Absolute Idea, inasmuch as the Absolute is the Idea (*Enc.* 213).

Hence there should be no separate philosophy of value, as what is separate (from the Idea) has no value³. Still less is there a “universe of values”, as if apart from what IS, simply, from the end realised as just what it is, being itself. Thus that the factual is normative means that there are no “norms”, but simply the fact.

So in writing of *Sittlichkeit* Hegel shows unambiguously that the centre is not here, just as it does not lie in the (philosophy of the) state.

³ Compare here Gabriel Marcel: “I would accordingly be inclined to make the following undoubtedly paradoxical affirmation that the introduction of the idea of value into philosophy, an idea virtually unknown to the great metaphysicians of the past, is as it were the sign of a fundamental devaluation of reality itself (*Les homes contre l’humain*, Paris 1951, p. 127).

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

NO ETHICAL THEORY IN HEGEL?

What follows largely takes the form of a critique of the earlier presentation of Hegel's thought by J.N. Findlay (1958)¹, one of two previous South Africans to write extensively on Hegel, the other being E.E. Harris². Findlay correctly presents, in his table of contents, the material he takes from Hegel's *The Philosophy of Right* of 1821, as "the philosophy of objective spirit". It is indeed the latter notion, and not merely jurisprudence as such, that is treated of in the section of Hegel's *Encyclopaedia* (final version 1830: hence it is not entirely true that the former book was "Hegel's last published work", as Findlay writes), entitled "Mind Objective" (part of *Enc.* III, "The Philosophy of Spirit"). This, though materially briefer and more succinct than the presentation in *The Philosophy of Right*, gives, partly also by virtue of its position in this larger and more comprehensive work, the fuller philosophical context. Its opening "sub-section" alone is entitled "Law". It continues on, however, in what is clearly a dialectical development (Hegel's normal method of presentation) and indeed *Aufhebung*, from this preliminary notion of Law, through the section entitled "Morality" simply (and not "The Morality of Conscience" specifically), its three sections entitled "Purpose", "Intention and Well-Being" and, thirdly, "Good and Evil" (again in a development), thus finally going over to "The Moral Life, or Social Ethics" (*zur die Sittlichkeit übergegangen*). This new term is thus clearly being used, I contend, expressly to overcome "morality", of conscience or of anything else.

The intention, therefore, is clearly to expunge morality as such as being a falsely conceived second absolute, impugning the necessary infinity of

¹ J.N. Findlay; *The Philosophy of Hegel*, "An Introduction and Re-Examination", Collier Books, New York 1966, Chapter 11: "The Philosophy of Objective Spirit".

² For E.E. Harris, see Giacomo Rinaldi's "The Identity of Thought and Being in Harris's Interpretation of Hegel's Logic" in *Dialectic and Contemporary Science: Festschrift in Honor of Errol E. Harris*, ed. Ph. T. Grier, University Press of America, Lanham, New York, London, 1989 (pp.69-88).

the Idea. This coincides in this respect with the presentation of Thomas Aquinas, for whom there is no specifically or exclusively “moral” motive³ for man’s attainment of his end. But what then needs to be explored is the apparent difference between Hegel’s and the earlier Aristotelian treatment of the virtues, I would argue. *Sittlichkeit*, anyhow, as Hegel’s text goes on, treats of “The Family”, “Civil Society” and “The State”. To translate this single term as “The Moral Life or Social Ethics” (this translation, to be found on the Internet, reflects uncertainty) is to obscure the depth of Hegel’s intention here, which is truly philosophical and not merely descriptive. This intention it is which explains why the last “sub-section” there treats of the State, which, the state, thus does not form part of Hegel’s final categorisation of the Philosophy of Spirit, viz. “Absolute Spirit”, which is divided, again in progressive development, into sections on Art, Religion and Philosophy.

There are thus not two or even three moralities, viz. the teleological, that of conscience and then social morality. Rather, there is teleology (*der Vorsatz*), studying life and its *telos* or end, from which there is a merely negative transition to Morality before overcoming the latter in a reduction of it to the customs, *die Sitten*, of a nation-state. The whole, therefore, is an exercise, in accordance with the schema of Hegel’s logic, no less, in the *Aufhebung*, the cancelling, of Objectivity, as had been done with Mind Subjective earlier, before uniting both in the Idea (this whole process is “The Doctrine of the Concept (*vom Begriff*)”). Incidentally to this Hegel can equate conscientiousness and wickedness as, in *The Phenomenology of Mind*, he had identified Good and Evil, their separation put as being this entirely abstract and “absolute vanity”, “the same awareness that the single self (*in seiner Einzelheit*) possesses the decision, for or against “the good” indifferently. This seems clear allusion to the late medieval and metaphysically decadent notion of a “freedom of indifference” (of the will: Hegel refers here to “This supreme pitch of the phenomenon of will”⁴), in

³ See our “The *bonum honestum* and the Lack of Moral Motive in Aquinas’s Ethical Theory”, *The Downside Review*, April 2000, pp. 85-111.

⁴ This phrase might be viewed as the key to what I am urging here. Will is a phenomenon, immediate appearance merely, as is the whole social apparatus giving itself up in abstract vanity to a supposed independent universe of value (morality: see my citation from Marcel in the previous chapter here, note 3). As a category will is thus absorbed, in Logic, into Absolute Knowledge or the Idea. Hegel is quite firm about this, thus heralding the rightness of Nietzsche’s intuition of a “beyond good and evil”, which has nothing to do with “the colossal wickedness of the Nazis” (Findlay). The key notion here is Hegel’s “identity of thought and being” as really the true, self-transcending Good, which, like Truth, is

abstract choice between good and evil, making of evil a real being, which it cannot be, as the notion of Law falsely suggests. Rather, as or if chosen, evil immediately becomes a good, as with Milton's Satan⁵: "Evil, be thou my good". Hegel's more immediate target, therefore, is Kant, inheriting, mainly through the Jesuit thinkers, this late medieval paradigm, contrary to that of the Thomist Dominicans or of Aristotle.

In general, then, earlier sections are absorbed and re-conceptualised in later sections and that is why I will claim that Hegel does not have a final or free-standing philosophy of morality, his constant aim being to present first philosophy or metaphysics as free-standing or "absolute", brooking no rival. This corresponds, I claim, to Aquinas's conception of his own thought, or of thought, that is to say, leading him to claim that morality and virtue are only called "the honourable good" inasmuch as they lead us to the true and alone honourable good which is the absolute or God.⁶

*

So here I conclude that in broader perspective *Sittlichkeit* is not at all intended as the dialectical perfection of morality, as Findlay would make out. It is, rather, substituted for it after Hegel has totally discredited morality by finding conscientiousness equivalent to wickedness or indeed (moral) goodness, i.e. one can choose, as was established in *The Phenomenology of Mind*. Hegel finds "moralism" bogus, in effect, as much as did Nietzsche after him. Thus it was the former and not the latter's contemporary, Beethoven, who wrote in his notebook: "Power is the morality of those who stand out from the rest, and it is mine", thus also incidentally concurring in Hegel's problematic, as it seems, of the esoteric and the exoteric, mirroring that between clerks and laity, now apparently solved under democracy by all becoming clerks, parables and fables giving way to the wine of the spirit, thus befuddling not a few, however, and giving birth to those "rebellious masses", as, say, Ortega, in the 1930s, found them to be, who understand nothing and respect nothing. In fact "the

nothing other than Being itself as presented to a will or intellect respectively, the former being characterised here as "phenomenon". Apart from this last point, this is exactly the doctrine of the pre-idealist Thomas Aquinas (cf. *Quaestiones Disputatae: De potentia*, VII). By this the Absolute alone is good: the "honourable good", *bonum honestum*, of morality or virtue, merely so-called as *leading* to this good. Religious absolutism and the strictly metaphysical find here their identity.

⁵ Or as in the text of an early song (c.1953) by Eartha Kitt, "I want to be evil, I want to be bad". One wants, without exception, under the modality of good.

⁶ See footnote 3.

masses” are nothing but a false category beloved of power-hungry ideologues condemning any truly autonomous democracy of a genuine “people” that one might hope for. Ideology is in general the perversion of philosophy into a time-bound or finite praxis with domination of the other as the end in view, whatever we might want to say about atheism in general in relation to the spirit, to spirituality or mind. The fire of the Idea consumes all, “fire in the head” according to a musical diarist (Nijinsky) and thinker subsequent to Beethoven.

Nonetheless, bogus or not, in the phenomenal world of society and politics we need guidelines, best supplied by the customs of that society. Aristotle had said much the same concerning ethics, namely that openness to its sense depended on being “well brought up”, as one would hardly say of metaphysics (first philosophy), religion or art. It was, that is, precisely not first philosophy. For Aristotle, though, the science of ethics required no more than a treatise on, a tabling of, the virtues needed for attainment of life’s purpose (end), for spiritually flourishing (*eudaimonia*). The adverb is necessary inasmuch as mind is the supreme form or form of all forms, as the expression “human being”, entangled in a spurious or phenomenal biologism, obscures. “Life is only the idea immediate” (Hegel). Thus virtues are interior or mental habits, each and all dispositions. or, finally, *the* disposition. Of each it is necessary to ask in what sense God might possess it, be identified with it, in what sense it is virtue itself or spirit, mind, the Idea, absolutely necessary as participant in realised end truly and not as “sham-being” only. Or is this evil “the same as good” (Hegel)? Is it just in this that the virtues transcend *Sittlichkeit*, i.e. if there is evil in God so that what is redemptive in both cases, of God or of virtue, is the absolute or infinite unity of the Idea, “beyond good and evil” since these two, in their separateness, are merely finite categories? That is, it is not good to speak of “good”. But hence, a fortiori, nor is it of God. That is the positive element in modern atheism. Here we approach the pardon or reconciliation needed for Absolute Knowledge, as Hegel, shows, thus incidentally saving the virtues in their transcendence of mere societal and temporal *Sittlichkeit*. This we have tried to show. Hegel’s thought thus coincides with that of those reducing morality and/or its language to prescription, the “ought”, to which nothing actual corresponds. Kant, he thus thinks, wrongly absolutises the non-actual, as the majesty of law, a representation merely, while wrongly, again, denying the truth of the actual in rejecting the ontological self-evidence of the Idea, which is not law but freedom. In general, “The aspect of self-concentration really

constitutes the essential moment of the self of Spirit.”⁷ Or, in general, morality, understood as virtuous behaviour founded upon natural law, is teleologically as opposed to moralism as it is to its own instrumentalisation in utilitarianism. As law, however, morality still needs further transformation into its own non-juristic metaphysics, coinciding with a unitary account of the virtues absolutised, indeed apotheosised, in Hegel to logic as sheer mind or spirit as “form of the world”. We have here left *Sittlichkeit* far behind are ourselves in the final and alone true realm, which is thus no realm at all, of Absolute Spirit, where “I will be what I will be” (Hebraist translation of the *Exodus* text where God gives his “name”). This, in truth, is the realm glimpsed and held in glimpse, so to say, in all the writings of Nietzsche. He never descended to writing about anything else.

In Hegel, under Kantian influence all the same or under that of the eighteenth century generally, the virtues as classically understood, good habits of mind and will, find little emphasis, tending to be dismissed under that initial moment of morality, viz. purpose (*der Vorsatz*), which is so far correct. He is focussed, like Aquinas, upon action, the “human act”, for the agent “existing” exclusively in knowledge and will (*Wissen und Willen*, at *Enc.* 504). It is, for him too, a matter of intention (*Absicht*), finally “comprehended in a single aim” as in happiness (*Glückseligkeit*), called by the later Thomist, Martin Grabmann SJ, *höchste Entfaltung der Sittlichkeit*, no doubt with Hegel’s account of the latter notion in mind (*Thomas von Aquin*, Munich 1959). Hegel, however, tends to reduce this notion of a universal satisfaction to “a mere negative” (§479, to which he here refers back). Decision, i.e. action, turns on action’s “springs” (*Trieben*), be they impulsive or considered, though consideration itself must be finally reducible to or, better, interpretable as, the final impulse, reason’s self-motion as buried in the actually infinite. So Hegel does not deny this in giving the casting vote to “the subjective feeling and good pleasure”. Thus Aquinas reasoned that the final aim of action, the last end, must be necessarily one in itself and one in and for all too, wherever we ourselves might individually place it (*setze* in Hegel here). Yet Hegel calls happiness “the mere abstract and merely imagined universality of things desired... which only ought to be”, recalling his general anti-Kantian polemic. Simultaneously, however, he redeems this (and Kant?) by and through a subtle dialectical move (at §480 here). The intrinsic universality of the will, namely, includes all that can be particularly willed, so that nothing is lost. This is its “very autonomy or freedom”, overcoming or

⁷ *The Phenomenology of Mind* (tr. Baillie), p.775 (concluding the three pages, 773-5, on Good and Evil).

cancelling finite “choice”. All choice has as aim, namely, “only that infinite mode of being – freedom itself”, “where concept and object are one”. Here alone, or at last, is will “an actually free will”. This is his philosophical account of angels or souls that cannot sin, their being established or confirmed “in grace”, as the theological narrative has it. This, Augustine, Aquinas and the tradition had maintained, is a greater freedom (actually its perfection) than that of openness to a wrong choice, of freedom as it appears within finitude. One should not call it or picture it as a “realm”, as if separated. Non-being, namely, is not separated from being, since being, as non-being’s negation, thus, albeit it in qualified manner, affirms it. Realms, by contrast, stand beside one another in their difference, merely.

All which thy child’s mistake,
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home.

This, in Francis Thompson’s poetic art (“The Hound of Heaven”), surely a case of Hegel’s “necessary picture-idea”, establishes and illustrates his and our meaning, namely, as does also Thompson’s “The Kingdom of God”:

O World invisible, we view thee,
O World intangible, we touch thee,
O World unknowable, we know thee,
Inapprehensible, we clutch thee!

The poem follows this up with rhetorically posed arguments (“Does the fish soar to find the ocean?” etc.). What Hegel adds is denial of the visibly tangible as in itself knowable at all without the Idea, which Thompson puts as “Christ walking on the water, not of Geneserath but of Thames”. In knowing anything, namely, “closer than self”, such as the Thames, as local and phenomenal moment rather than what functions as specifically “religious” representation or “picture idea” to abstract thought, we know *that*, the Idea. Geneserath, by comparison, is a representation at a further remove. This, Hume’s valid distinction, is not always so explicit in Hegel, however. Is Hegel’s concept of an or the Idea as “moment” of another analogous after all? But then we might ask this question equally of “moment”. “Being is said in many ways”. Is Hegel, that is to say, in need of further Aristotelian correction and was a poet needed to clarify this? A link with Heidegger, in the triple line of Hegel, Nietzsche (*Beyond Good*

and Evil) and Heidegger (on “the truth of poetry”⁸), suggests itself here. There are no separate “intellectual republics” or realms, again. Nor are the three forms of Absolute Spirit separate. “It is useless to count”. That applies here too.

*

Thus Hegel does not completely dismiss virtue. Quite the contrary, we have been showing. He rather frees it from mere finite *Sittlichkeit* and the latter, as pure temporal representation, from it. Hegel’s doctrine of virtue is, this implies, no longer merely “practical” or “moral” philosophy, such as the abstract departmental separations of some collegial institutes seek theoretically to enshrine, or take for granted rather.

We return then to Hegel’s account of Good and Evil, apparently so at variance with the earlier metaphysic, while inseparable from his doctrine of the Idea and hence of God. This account, as being throughout theogonic rather than “anthropological”, in this respect parallels that of Aquinas, even though in it evil is given a more positive role and thus found more explicable, or explicated, than in the earlier system. Hegel holds more firmly to the Thomistic principle, as against the Molinists and others, that God is first mover of will everywhere, moving, in fact, by absolute knowledge wherein will is anyhow absorbed. So insofar as the negative is reality, God moves and brings it about. It belongs, in short, in identity as moment, with the Idea. In this way Hegel agrees with Aquinas that there can be no “radical” evil. It is always “in a subject” ontologically good as antecedent or prior. Or, a suggestion at times arising, evil turns out in some respects to be ontologically good in itself or, equivalently, must be said to be so. These two views have to be reconciled and better integrated still.

Thus virtue, in being redeemed, has disappeared. Like morals, it is a “language”, though the “of” of R.M. Hare’s classic title, *The Language of Morals*, seems not, as we do here, to intend an identification (Hare contrasts “moral substance” with what he finds merely lexicographical or “classificatory”). Philosophy has nothing to do with intentions. It is language itself that we, with Hegel, seek to overcome, in that battle against bewitchment of intelligence by it that Wittgenstein once posited as philosophy’s essence. In overcoming it we overcome moral virtue as well, seen, in contrast to fully flourishing intellectual virtue, fulfilled in love or

⁸ This is the title of a study of modern poetry by Michael Hamburger (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1969, reissued in Pelican Books, 1972).

in so-called “theological” virtue, as the immediate moment of abstract *praxis* merely. There is no other path but this narrow one to Absolute Knowledge or Realised End⁹ where all that is true or good rejoins the Idea, which Hegel identifies with Being (see the greater *Science of Logic*, final section), the final or absolute “transcendental” prior or posterior to its being “said” at all or in however many ways.

We might be tempted to posit the being of language as a fourth form of Absolute Spirit. Quite plainly, though, it is the ground form or foundation of Art, such spirit’s first or immediate form. Hence Hegel sees poetry, *Dichtung*, as the ground form of *poesis*, being through language closely connected with philosophical thought. Thought it is, in fact, although, as Plato saw, it is not in thought’s own form essentially. Thus musical composition, its art, is best called *Tondichtung*, “composition” being a needlessly unworthy metaphor. Here too we may mark Hegel’s placing of hearing above seeing as closer to thought, art’s final absolution from its limitations in fulfilment of itself.

It seems to follow that style is everything, the medium the message, the sign the signified. It is in this sense that the Concept is the sign, and nothing else, of the Idea. It is, namely, a sign formally, a *signum formale*, in a phrase of Descartes’ contemporary Jean Poinot, self-called “of St. Thomas”, a pure “that by which”, *id quo*.¹⁰ What Hegel brings out is that the Concept, taken absolutely, is, by the same token (sign), the sign of itself. For in this sense alone is it the case that “The definition, which declares the Absolute to be the Idea, is itself absolute” (*Enc.* 213). That things can be signs of themselves, incidentally, was a principle put forward in sacramental theology in defence of transubstantiation-theory against the charge that this “overthrows the nature of a sacrament” (from the *Thirty-Nine Articles* of the infant Church of England).¹¹ So this idea, employed by Aquinas, as Poinot saw, in support of “moderate realism”, gets identified in Hegel as the very essence of Absolute Idealism, itself synonymous, he claims, with philosophy. Thus meet two extremes of moderation. Language, anyhow, *logos*, is revealed at philosophy’s summit as one with metaphysics, is revealed as basic form and origin of Art, of spirit in, temporally speaking, its first struggles to be born. In fact though,

⁹ This point is made clearly by Giacomo Rinaldi in his rebuttal of a review of his *Teoria etica*, Trieste 2004. See G. Rinaldi’s bilingual volume: *Absolute Idealism and Contemporary Philosophy*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt 2012, pp. 139-163 (“*Skepticismus und Metaphysik in Hegels Denken*”).

¹⁰ Cf. Aquinas, *Summa theol.* Ia 85, 2 on intelligible species or appearance(s).

¹¹ Cf. Abbot Ansgar Vonier OSB: *A Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist* (published during the 1920s).

or necessarily, spirit can neither be born nor die. The final actuality, thought itself, however we take it, “is not what you think”. It is at once pure form and actual, as form must become when mind frees itself from the fantasy of a material correlate. *Immaterialitas intellectus est forma cognitionis*. It is in reflection upon language by language that reflection is first embodied in speculative dialectic, though Hegel himself mainly touches upon this only in additions, e.g. to *Enc.* 458 and 459 (“The Philosophy of Spirit”, under “Imagination”, which refers us to Art, as premised here).¹²

*

So we said that virtue is a language, a narrative, in fact, which means a fiction, one needed, as is *Sittlichkeit* generally, within all the phenomena of the passing and visible, from education to living itself. Thus a virtue ethics builds upon and improves a law ethics¹³ while making the contradictions more plain before yielding place to absolute knowledge, in which language itself is swallowed up, the pen laid down. Therefore like all phenomena it is false when taken abstractly and not as one with the Idea as a moment thereof, like the creation or nature itself, even granted that such a moment and all moments are necessary, just as they are, in the perfect freedom of the Absolute as the End as such realised. Choice itself, we might say, has no choices to make. That in fact is what is called in religion the love of God for each and every person, whom, in each case, the Idea itself, as follows indeed from the Logic already, has never been without. For if, as represented in the religious documentation reckoned “inspired”, there are some of or indeed *to* whom spirit relates as saying “I never knew you” then such persons even now are not knowable or, as it is put, “You are from below, I am from above”, i.e. they have, like Lucifer, their “appointed place”. I simply note this presentation of the “doctrine” we should “know of” as within the spiritual community of those “led by the spirit”, passing no judgment. I note, though, that it makes the virtue of hope personal to each one in addition to its being “cosmic”. I add, though, two citations, Thérèse Martin’s (1873-1897) “Every soul gets what it expects” and St. Paul’s “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin”: we must believe in what we do and say. Let each decide for himself or herself whether such doctrine is compatible with its own necessary *facit*, viz. “All

¹² See also Derrida’s searching article, “Thought and Language in Hegel”.

¹³ The project of Thomas Aquinas, according to Mark D. Jordan: “The *Summa*’s Reform of Moral Teaching – and its Failures”, in *Contemplating Aquinas* (ed. Fergus Kerr, OP), London and Notre Dame, 2003, 2006.

shall be well and all manner of thing”, fourteenth century words of Julian of Norwich. Philosophy cannot say more. We might ask, though, of the Hegelian Lucifer, first “son”, “of the morning” namely: is he not also, by Hegel’s word and analysis “in God”? If, indeed, we question his personal individual being, since “it is useless to count” (and not only *in divinis*), then shall we not apply this to ourselves too, as “not knowing what we shall be” (cf. *I John*) in a future consuming even now our fancied present? In Hegel’s philosophy generally, as in Platonism, thought and its blessedness (*Enc.* 159) precede existence as the more fundamental form of being. “The last”, anyhow, “shall be first”, as we might learn from the late Ruth Rendell, who expressed compassion for psychopathic criminals, multiply imagined in her novels. Each, anyhow, is only responsible for himself as, just thereby, all. By Hegel’s thought anyhow, if good and evil are the same then so, thus far, are heaven and hell. Heaven is here where Juliet lives while, similarly, here is hell, says Mephistopheles to Faust, nor am I out of it. Why then do you ask me to show you such a thing or non-thing?

Absolute laws, or human rights are thus fictions and those who have made this point are in deep agreement with Hegel, mostly unknowingly. They are fictions because our whole life is a fiction of misperception, the Idea immediate only. It is really, therefore, the opposite of itself, death as entry into spirit, Hegel says. “Oh life that is no life at all”, this typically mystical, hence speculative, cry (Teresa of Avila), puts the point exactly. A right to be includes a right to be murdered, say. Even all teleology, the right to happiness, is included under this, is here absorbed in this Titanic encounter of Being and Nothing, along with all usefulness. We ourselves, therefore, not in time but absolutely, do better, thought thinking itself, to stop all thinking, here too “using the world as though we used it not”, in profound accord with Christianity, “counting all things (as) dung”, the particular or unhappy “I” crossed out in final and indeed absolute self-consciousness or in a mutuality of persons, a personal “coinherence”.

This philosophical way of speculation, therefore, is just the opposite of the way in which we are necessarily educated, from childhood up. There we must first learn virtue, and this, furthermore first of all in the form of commandments, before the child can see the sense of them. After a long apprenticeship he may later arrive at something like the Idea, at Absolute Knowledge, namely, in full self-consciousness, self-guiding, as is explained in theology and philosophy, an analogue to which is the goodness derived from some or any experience of beauty, from art, typically, as expounded in Plato’s philosophy. Then he, the child, will understand that from this all virtue derives, the philosopher thus

understanding all things and so uniquely suitable for kingship, over his own soul and spirit first of all, in what is thus the Kingdom of Ends (as in Kant), since all are kings, priests and prophets.

Thus at the end of our life we necessarily learn how it should have been but was not. In that necessity, specifically, all is contained. But what does this, this insight into established necessity, make life, our life, to be? We learn by our mistakes, we routinely say., as even the boy-Christ grew “in wisdom and stature”. These go together, as the evolution doctrine mirrors.. The Idea, though, unites evolution and revolution, inasmuch as progress is by changing, replacing and yet transforming what held one back. It is therefore a constant Becoming, which is a Hegelian logical category. Every category becomes the next or new one, up to the end-Idea, in itself realised from the first. The thinking of Becoming is thus a retracing. Or, thinking finds itself to be what is already or eternally thought, the Idea.

Yet, and by the same coin, this logical Becoming is itself retraced or set out in the actual Absolute that logic arrives at in the Concept. Logic itself passes to Nature as never having left it, as contained with it in Spirit, in Absolute Mind, for which it, Nature, and Logic too, are moments it passes through, which have their reality only in it. Spirit results from them before even beginning since, better said, it *is* this resulting, in act eternal, never finished but without being at all unfinished. In Spirit they, the moments, are explained and have their sense and, it is the same, their being. Logic, then, is abstracted from Spirit in (self-)conscious quest and seizure of itself. Life is a return. Hence life does not itself return. What returns upon itself is thought, as including all, even this very present. Immortality is not ours particularly; it is death's, or life's, non-being or negativity, its constant back-drop, in giant letters on the spine of this “book of life”, which should not therefore be left open, as not itself the final chapter, of the book, not itself.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

INTERIOR SOULS

What Hegel's thought shows is that the desire to see God requires an entire turning inwards, in what is nothing other, therefore, than "the interior life", celebrated especially in the French tradition of spirituality, of contemplation. It is, in fact, nothing other than thinking. To this all thinking is orientated, all consciousness. The extreme perversity of Descartes' making of this a means to guaranteeing other, finite truths hid this from me as a young man, inculcated a feeling of the vanity of philosophy, only useful as an aid to right belief rather than possibly being the substance of it.

Another obstacle was the conviction, inculcated by many well-meaning writers on the orthodox side, that the whole "venture of prayer" had to be preceded by moral perfection, in possession of all virtue or the virtues as a whole. When I read Thérèse of Lisieux saying she had no virtues I simply did not believe her, assumed she meant something else. Virtue in fact, as a form, is its own content and one will look in vain for this content elsewhere, or in abstraction from this form, which is also called love, a conviction as much as it is a dedication. Like God, we will then "speak only one word". Ideas are not interior, though we say they are "in" us (where?) as having become "interior souls", transcending life itself. For what is this interiority, as it is called, but a figure for a comprehensive consciousness, in full self-consciousness knowing itself alone as identified entirely with each and all, severally or in combination? If it is truly not outside yet it is not inside either, but identical with these ideas, of which each one in turn is "identical with the divine essence", Aquinas affirms. So, thus far, these moments are not to be conceived as "at first" being outside of the self, from which they rather have proceeded, by an act of self-alienation or going forth, so as thus to return. Or, consciousness itself becomes first aware of them in becoming aware of itself, self-conscious. In this way, to look upon the outside and really see it is to be drawn deep inside, to be reminded "of what the spirit must win for itself" (*Enc.* 24, add.). Innocence, the child, has what it has "as a gift from the hand of nature". Yet what is here set forth is not the halfway stopping-point, the

dualism of “myself and God” as the original two (Newman). The mind, as at first appearance instinct, has to “become what it is”. Ultimately, you cannot enter the kingdom except as being already in it. As “an interior soul” one must thus, or also, “forget thy father’s house”. Only so shall “the king desire thy beauty”, as proper to himself, no less.

Here we pass from the plane of moral striving specifically, as wanting only one thing, in Kierkegaardian or Teresian “purity of heart” (either Teresa will do as well). This is the true Socratic self-knowledge, the understanding of “this place, appointed for my second race” and of which reincarnation is indeed a figure, as “trailing clouds of glory” do we come. The truth is there is no incarnation at all, of anyone, not even the mediator, and Scripture teaches the same in the simple statement that “all flesh is as grass”, simply as being temporal. “Incarnation”, the dogmatic term, is as much “picture-thinking” as is “creation”, though, with Hegel, we may call this thinking, this language, necessary, on a par, analogously at least, with the phantasmata of Aristotle, without which we cannot think or, according to him, hold fast to any thought or thinking at all. These are the *species impressa*, impressed species, in which and by which we see and know all that we know, the *signa formalia* of John of St. Thomas (Poinsot), never themselves seen in themselves, any more than is the image on the retina. So we need to ask how we should take McTaggart’s affirmation of the “probability” of “reincarnation”, as Geach expounds him in his *Truth, Love and Immortality*, although Geach himself rejects reincarnation as self-contradictory in an essay in his *God and the Soul* collection.

“Incarnation” is as much a picture, for Hegel, then, as is “creation” (*The Phenomenology of Mind*, Baillie p. 769), whether it is applied to “the mediator” or to anyone else. Mediation itself is ultimately found self-cancelling by Hegel’s logic. We who employ the term, the *flatus vocis*, are ourselves not the selves we are, Hegel will claim, meaning that the “soulless word ‘is’” and hence all judgment, in a valid reversal of the implication, is itself not itself. “What do you mean by ‘valid’?” Anscombe had asked this of Lewis. Here we have the answer this secret Hegelian might have given. Mind emerges in nature because nature is already God’s “word”. There can be no question, therefore, of that empiricist “naturalism” from or as against which Lewis reasons (in his *Miracles* of 1947). Nature is “in” the Idea, as its moment of self-alienation. By and in reason, then, it is self-guaranteed, as Anscombe too was unable to validate, falling back upon a logical conventionalism as defining the academy. If one revolts against it one is accused of “forgetting everything one had ever learned about logic”. These were Anscombe’s words to me one day in Rome, explaining her husband’s disaffection with his former pupil, en

route to Hegelianism *via* “intentional logic”, as “disgust”. He himself had informed me in a letter that I was “not natively good at logic”. So let the reader take care.

*

This introduction of a personal note, of background, is deliberate and I hope not ill-judged. I find no better way, for the present, of expounding the Hegelian system as one with that of interiority, as explained above, as transcending all system and as thus systematically explicable. The mystic indeed has to come down from the mountain, as did the Apostles, clearly, from the mountain of the “transfiguration” of Christ, there truly seen. This is what academic philosophy submitted itself to after the long period of English Hegelianism in particular, separated from the natural developments of it that had gone on in Germany, in the thought of such as Nietzsche and later Heidegger, or in French thinking. The work of a German mathematician and his disciple Wittgenstein, however, formed a kind of potential bridge here.¹

Thus my first acquaintance with academic philosophy was with philosophy of that kind, with “what the English call philosophy” (Hegel’s phrase, see *Enc.* 7). For Hegel himself, however, the content of philosophy is philosophical knowledge as the final form of consciousness as being “no other than actuality” (*Enc.* 6: *Wirklichkeit*), which (actuality) is, in turn, just such knowledge, as, in absolute or final form, self-knowledge, where knowledge is knower. Hegel stresses the act, the actuality, of such knowing rather than the mere idea of it, though this itself also is an act indeed of such actuality. This leads him to coin these awkward terms, actusosity or actuousness, according to one of his translators at least. For this act, its own actuality (*Wirklichkeit*), is essentially one of active generation, never begun, therefore, and never finished.

In this conviction, that what is reasonable is actual, and what is actual is reasonable, stands every plain man, as well as the philosopher; and from it philosophy starts in the study both of the spiritual and of the natural universe... The great thing however is in the show of the temporal and the transient to recognise the substance which is immanent and the eternal which is present. For the work of reason (which is synonymous with the idea), when in its actuality it simultaneously enters external existence, emerges with an infinite wealth of forms, phenomena and phases, and

¹ See articles by Hans Sluga on Frege’s alleged realism and allied topics published in *Inquiry* in the 1970s.

envelopes its kernel with the motley rind with which consciousness is earliest at home, - a rind which the notion must penetrate before it can find the inward pulse and feel it still beating even in the outward phases. But the infinite variety of circumstance which is formed in this externality by the light of the essence shining in it, - all this infinite material, with its regulations, - is not the object of philosophy.... To comprehend what is, is the task of philosophy: for what is is reason.²

With this Hegel, as Aristotle before him, expunges the mirage of an absolute dichotomy of the theoretical and the practical (Aristotle: *theoria* is the highest *praxis*), as the Scholastics did not all or always hold clearly before them. This is the whole force, also, of the Hegelian criticism of the “ought” as intruded into metaphysics and especially those of morals. The “contemplative life” as an option within life is thus a figure for that truth standing beyond all figuring, all representation either of it or of an “active life” (as alternative option), as it stands beyond the religious exhortation: “Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only”. Act is thought, is thinking, is spirit. Thus Herbert said, in poetic form, that “he who sweeps a room as for thy laws” is worshipping, at prayer, lost in contemplation indeed. In his mind he is as still or stiller than a statue and this is harmony, the true and concrete identity of mind with itself. It is the interior nullification of Inward and Outward as a contrasting pair, as of all such pairing as such, beginning with Being and Nothing, the latter put at first (or last?) as Non-Being. Really one does not begin but is already at sea in a leaky boat (Nestroy as cited by Wittgenstein), confronted with some urgent specific tasks to perform. This corresponds to Hegel saying, in the continuation of the passage quoted and elsewhere, that no one, not even Hegel, “can overleap his time” So “philosophy is its time apprehended in thoughts” (my stress), each individual being “a son of his time”. Here though, uncharacteristically, Hegel implicitly distinguishes philosophy from sophia, that supra-historical gallery of forms he elsewhere mentions, or I would judge that he does.

As for interiority, it can be seen that philosophy, or thinking simply as essentially self-knowing, perfects itself in “spiritual resurrection”, in return to self out of the alienation that is nature. That is, self itself is thinking. Hegel gives the rationale why thinking and nothing else is, is being, as the

² Hegel, *Werke*, viii, 17. The translation is perhaps by W. Wallace, who cites it. Thus one would like to be more clear as to whether Hegel says it is “reason” or “the work of reason” which is “synonymous with the Idea”. Schelling is quoted thus: “reason is, in one word, the prime matter and the real of all being.”

Logic concludes. Here he not merely supplements the enthymematical cogito. He corrects its conclusion:

I am thought
Thought is being
Therefore I am being.

What this also urges is that “I am” or “God is” (or exists) are not properly judgments in logic, dialectical or otherwise. The English continuous present is oblique acknowledgement of this, as in “I am thinking” or “I am eating”, in itself not oblique. It is we who by custom render it so. We are indeed what we do, as these sentences propose, as our analysis of knowing as self-knowing, as absolute, confirms. The actual form of the continuous present is otherwise totally formless, opaque rather than oblique. Every judgment must have a copula (implicit or explicit) and must thus consume it, its truth therefore consisting in its self-ablation as judgment. This results not in the imaginary logical proposition *de secundo adjacente*, e.g. “God exists” or “I am”, which is a simple importation from Latin grammar and not any kind of logical consequence of the meaning of “is”, still less “exists”, in any language, but in the speculative or self-transcending judgment that all judgments are false in whatever form we give them. Nothing rather is existent as everything is non-existent. This is the Idea and the Idea is being, or non-being. The absolute, as act, transcends existence (and hence judgments, about it or in themselves). This is the plainly Aristotelian *facit* of Hegel’s thought. Dialectical logic is here less “mystical” as being more strict than the traditional. Therefore, after its issue into nature this logic is perfected in the philosophy of spirit, as one-sided dogmatism is clarified in ecumenism.

For dialectical logic, then, it is not possible to say simply that a thing, anything, exists. This might recall Henry Veatch’s repeated criticism of Fregean logic, that it “can’t say what anything is”. Dialectical logic does this, but only to dismantle it as a form of falsity, going so far as to say that a thing is not a thing, is nothing, a mere momentary category of specifically finite or “picture”-thinking, in our saying which the term “picture” is of course not used as a mere picture. Thus used, it would be hard to say what the word “thing” in fact pictures, we may note. “Things exist” is a nonsensical statement. It does not even have the form of a statement, we declared above. The theism-atheism debate, circling round the questions “Does God exist?” or “Is there a God?”, which both sides took to be meaningful, was thus wrong-headed. The only meaningful question is “What is God?” This question can allow the response “God is nothing” or “a chimera” These, however, might invite, as perhaps final

form, the riddles “When is nothing something?” or “When is a chimera not a chimera?” These were the most primitive forms of the riddle in the childhood of at least many, if not all of us, when it was most often based upon awareness of accidents in language: e.g. “When is a door not a door?” “When it’s a jar.” (ajar). Behind, however, lay a first approach to the deepest philosophical questions. So Schopenhauer’s gibe against Hegel as “riddling” was maybe not so well judged.

*

So again, contemplation, this knowledge, this love, thinking, as blessedness (*Enc.* 159), is itself total virtue, undivided into moral or intellectual moments. One can be cleansed of vice in a moment, just as well as in a fifty-year discipline, no one anyhow being better than he is or worsened by encounter with the non-being of evil. Dostoyevsky touches this, in his *The Possessed*, when he imagines Stavrogin, the arch-nihilist, lost in a reverie of contemplation. This in fact is the idea behind that of possession (by what is not oneself), as well as the rationale of the pardoning disposition Hegel makes essential to spiritual life and hence knowledge. This pardon is not a moment of the logical idea but a phenomenon, a moment, of spirit (absolutely the Idea) eternally absorbed and thus fulfilled in absolute knowing. At this final level virtues don’t count and so it was in this respect an advance on Aristotle for Hegel and Kant to have seen this, just as it is through these their predecessors that Nietzschean or Heideggerian “nihilism” might be better understood for what it is and not for what it is not. Then we can get on, to Wittgenstein, for example:

There must indeed be some kind of ethical reward and ethical punishment. But they must reside in the action itself... It is impossible to speak about the will in so far as it is the subject of ethical attributes... And the will as a phenomenon is of interest only to psychology. (Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*: 6.423 and 6.43).

How Hegelian this sounds, and is! The same might be said of Quine’s Duhemian holism, inasmuch as he makes all partial truth only actual as seen in and with the whole, which is the absolute and the Idea, in Hegel’s terms.³ Similarly McTaggart’s “atheistic” yet Hegelian vision of reality, of God as some might say, as consisting entirely of persons, any number of

³ Cf. W.V.O. Quine: “Our statements about external reality face the tribunal of sense experience not individually but as a corporate body” (*Methods of Logic*, 1952).

them, is a one-to-one embodiment of Kant's "kingdom of ends", itself a simple rendering of the Deuteronomic command to "love thy neighbour as thyself", since, Hegel if not McTaggart would add, that is what he is. This, and not mere moralistic reflection, lies behind the Scriptural declaration of the (logical) impossibility of loving the unseen God without loving the neighbour or other, "one another". One does not deny, though, that Quine himself, maybe, does not concur in this entirely personal world.⁴ Yet McTaggart in fact argues, by strict logic, that what we think to see as impersonal must in fact be personal if it is anything. Physics here would fall under what we think we see, the phenomenal. Hence it can be claimed that it is a mere preface to metaphysics, rather than that the latter should be a mere postscript to Aristotle's or any physics. In that way the universal, science, is fulfilled, unified, revealed, as person, as personality, of which it is "principle" (Hegel). Such it can only be, however, if the personal, as rational, is fons et origo of all as the unity, in one Word, of all its moments within itself. The ultimate principle is principle of itself only. In that lies its ultimacy, its freedom from all abstraction as being absolute knowledge, the Idea, self-consciousness, its own community. "Now you are the body of Christ", generated as generating's own principle "in act" (and hence generating in turn), in the one Word, in one moment or movement, which is Spirit. This, that God is spirit, Hegel affirms, "is the lesson of Christianity". Only philosophy can declare this, thus attaining, which is to say, in this last instance, beginning from, its own self-consciousness.

And thus the very greatness of the evil which we endure gives us some slight anticipation of the greatness of the good which outweighs it infinitely... Of the nature of that good we know something. We know that it is a powerful and endless state of love – love so direct, so intimate, and so powerful that even the deepest mystic rapture gives us but the slightest foretaste of its perfection. We know that we shall know nothing but our beloved, and those they love, and ourselves as loving them, and that only in this shall we seek and find satisfaction. Between the present and that fruition there stretches a future which may well need courage. For while there will be in it much good, and increasing good, there may await us

⁴ For criticism of Quine's adoption of "mathematical logic", as distinct from dialectic, for replacement or development of traditional formal logic, see our "Argument Forms and Argument from Analogy", *Acta Philosophica* (Rome), vol. 6 (1997) pp. 303-310, discussing *inter alia* "Venn diagrams".

evils which we can now measure only by their infinite insignificance as compared with the final reward.⁵

Such love cannot logically or reasonably be viewed as mediated (by what?). It is an immediate pull, best compared to a death-blow, or to the in principle universal experience of “falling in love”, universal, that is, in the sense of Hegel’s universal will, when citing Rousseau, “not to be confused with what is merely held in common”. That it is not this latter is the burden of Plato’s *Phaedrus*, preserving Socrates’ utter contempt for the non-lover, as praised by Lysias, as making any kind of claim to be a philosopher. I recall reading that when a pupil of Hilbert’s abandoned philosophy to write novels the great man referred to this as a “lack of love”, which has no tendency to deny that novelists or artists as such lack love. Far from it! I am talking about philosophy’s own self-consciousness, in Hilbert’s person here.⁶

But when the lover sees all perfection in his mistress, and the cynical world laughs at his delusion (as the serving-maid laughed at Thales when he fell down the well), McTaggart holds that it is the world, not the lover, that is sunk deep in delusion; the lover perceives by anticipation the real beauty that he will see face to face in Heaven.⁷ By “anticipation” here cannot be meant, as the term is often used, a mere expectancy, if one already “perceives”. This would be consistent with McTaggart’s denial, which he finds in Hegel, of the reality of time.

⁵ J.M.E. McTaggart, *The Nature of Existence*, Cambridge University Press, 1927, cited in P.T. Geach’s *Truth, Love and Immortality*, “Introduction to McTaggart’s Philosophy”, final page. Compare Hegel’s *Enc.* 159.

⁶ Cp. our “Happiness and Transcendental Happiness”, *Religious Studies* 21, Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp. 349-367, esp., for Socrates, p.352..

⁷ McTaggart, *Some Dogmas of Religion*, London: E. Arnold, 1906: second printing with an introduction by C.D. Broad, 1930., p. 232 (parenthesis added). I give the page-number as cited by Geach (*op. cit.* p.173).

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

ABSOLUTE IDEALISM, UNIVERSAL OF UNIVERSALS, SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS, DEATH

“Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.”

The fear of death is the fear “that I may cease to be” in a continuing world of other things, other people. If absolute idealism is the true philosophy, however, then this cannot occur. As self-conscious my individuality is submerged, transcended. I carry all otherness, hence all others, within me as identical with self, as, reciprocally, do they. So each, in a further deduction, is thus necessary to the whole as the whole is necessary to it. Hence Hegel says that self-conscious mind can endure death. As All it cannot cease to be without the Idea itself being cancelled, which is, again, impossible. “If God is for us, who can be against us?”

The citations are a deliberate choice, in order to show, to urge, the presence of each in all, all in each, by Hegel’s system, as also to show the latter as in continuation with spirit’s entire trajectory. Mind takes death to itself as it takes existence, the thing, life, being, means, end or anything else, knowing it is not death as we have imagined it because it, mind, cannot be annihilated, while if it is denied that death, non-being or non-life is a category then they can only be mere phenomenal representation, like “tomorrow’s breakfast”, which, this, latter, is not even anything immediately experienced (Wittgenstein’s point about death). They are not moments of the Idea. Thus too Hegel stresses at one point in the Logic that existence too, incidentally the reverse pole to death, is not, as Cajetan (1468-1534) had claimed as part of his refutation of a certain form of Scotism (in *On the Analogy of Names*), an independent order from essence in general but, rather, a finite category like any other, which essence subsumes, along indeed with being in general, with, even, identity and difference both, into itself, before being itself subsumed into the concept as, ultimately, the Idea. There cannot be two orders of being, God plus creation, say, in absolute “ontological discontinuity”, for in which order of these two, then, would the discontinuity itself have its being? Rather, the

more modern as also the more Biblical view, anticipated by those called “mystics”¹, is that “in God we live and move and have our being”. There is just one order, in which existence takes its “momentary” place. We can say, with the Platonists, that thought is superior to being or that thought is the true being, indifferently. This is the superiority of essence to being, in Hegel’s system, both being finally subsumed in the Concept (of the Idea).

Scholastics anticipated this unity in and by thought or the Idea by affirming that the grace of creation posits “more beings but not more being”, though this formula remains defective, a picture, as seeming to allowing still that God might be viewed as one being among many, to which the creation adds “more”, even though without final quantitative increment, at least as regards the form of speech.² So, in strictly dialectical

¹ Hegel is justified in equating “speculative truth” with “what... used to be called mysticism” insofar as he now establishes the former as normative, thus establishing the esoteric in its esotericity, rather as he establishes religion become absolute (in conceptual self-contradiction) as philosophy. It is his interpretation of the threefold revolutionary slogan, “liberty, equality, fraternity”, as, in turn, evangelical fulfilment (cp. J. Maritain, *Christianity and Democracy*, Geoffrey Bles, London, 1944). Against such speculative truth, in Philistine mode, J.S. Mill in his *Logic* (V, 3, §4) later declared: “Mysticism is neither more nor less than ascribing objective existence to the subjective creations of the mind’s own faculties, to mere ideas of the intellect”, thus retaining the dualities of objective and subjective, outer and inner, as if Hegel had never written or as if Kant had said the last word.

² Behind this lay perhaps a fear of affirming the nothingness of the Church, routinely identified with “the Kingdom of God”. This was and is countered by the ceremony of throwing dust at a newly crowned Pope and chanting “Remember o man that thou art but dust and to dust thou shalt return”, while in more recent theology the Church as pure sign or symbol, sacrament even (cp. E. Schillebeeckx: *Christ the Sacrament*) is distinguished from “the Kingdom of God”, reinterpreting the older duo of Church “militant” or “triumphant”, where Purgatory became the Church “expectant” or similar, the contrastive development mentioned bringing out how an absolutist or “realist” view of time, to say nothing of space, had not then been transcended in dogmatic thought. It is shown though that these things are potentially or, a variant, “innately” known to all, a position made explicit by the nineteenth century Hegelian “ontologists”. It is into this pre-existent being, which is mind, the Idea, into which, as consequent “first”, the *idea of* being first, i.e. among the fallen, “falls”, *cadit*, in Thomas Aquinas, here, at least, taking mind universally and yet concretely. For him matter is a “necessary being”, yet it is pure potentiality, nothing actual. Therefore, for him as for Hegel, Being and Nothing are initially the same prior, under the guise of Objective and Subjective, to their fusion in the truth of the Idea, the “ruin of the individual” in its spiritually “ungrateful” journey from self to God as “its own result”, as final self-consciousness, at the

leap, advance or “upward spring”, whereby thought “cancels the mediation in the very act of mediating” (*Enc.* 50), such dialectical advance, in the seamless robe of truth, mirrors and analogises the same affirmation, the same Idea, of death as non-death (*in-mors*) that religion, or any artwork, expresses, incarnates, realises, founding it as it founds them, neither abstracted from the other. If one is already nothing then death, as annihilation, simply consummates this insight. Rather, it is this insight “in full act”. With this insight one says, in effect, “No man takes my life from me, I lay it down of myself”, now or forever indifferently, which is no more than another way of saying that life is “only the Idea immediate”. The saying, however, is not as such the doing without that uttering and doing (generating, rather) become the same, in a Word that is one in being with the speaker. So, in words of that Word: “In speaking use not many words but let your yes be yes, let your no be no”, even should you affirm, with Hegel, and not deny, the identity of sameness and difference.³

*

Here mind must not be regarded as a part of man. It is rather man’s self-transcendence, whereby man is made nothing, this being the whole of him, by the Idea, which “brings to nought the things which are”. “The last Adam became a living spirit”, i.e. not a man but more than a man, as is implied in saying “God was made man”, the passive necessarily standing here, in inversion, for the supremely active “taking of the manhood into God”.⁴

close of Logic as Hegel expounds it. in this its ruin, however, the individual, the person, is alone fulfilled, the “me” being forsaken by both God and self in one. So, and thus, “I shall not die but live” (warrior psalm used in Easter liturgy or psalmody).

³ Here is assumed an account of tradition one with that which Hegel gives in the religion chapter of *The Phenomenology of Mind*. This account goes on, indeed, to reconcile itself with, as incarnating, the most absolute freedom of thought conceivable, thus expressing or further concretising that first logical fusion of Being and its negation in the category of a perpetual Becoming or renovating. “Behold I make all things new”, i.e. all the time, so to say. But just this is what sublates time as being the very essence of time. This is Hegel’s philosophy of history as expounded, or exposed, on the last page or two of the afore-mentioned work.

⁴ These considerations may help to resolve the query left partially at least unresolved in Fr. Daniel Jamros’s critical article on Hegel and Christianity (nor is it yet fully resolved, as he indicates, by James Yerkes’s arguments). See Daniel P. Jamros: “Hegel and the Incarnation – Unique or Universal?” in *Theological*

But again the simplest logical steps enact this pictured scenario conceptually. They thus cast light back on it as *ipso facto* revealing that they do so. Logic, that is, is revelation. That is the point. The “before creation” (logic gets to be called “God before creation”) is already creation, necessarily or by a necessity transcending logical necessity as being the necessity of logic itself, as Aristotle said (and Hegel cites this) that time or movement do not themselves move, Time is not itself time-flow. We are not to suppose, then, in the nature of this case (which is *casus* or event or “thing” as such, viz. as category, e.g. actuality), that only, or even supremely, he, Hegel, or those I have been citing, came, phenomenally, to see this, as we later are seeing it while, admittedly or as it may seem at least, sitting on their shoulders. Revelation is eternal and constant, the generator having his, her or its being in the active (actual) generating of the uttered and yet self-conceiving concept, the bringing to birth in that ever-present and hence not decaying act of the newness that unresting time, and hence nature, only reflects and images. The mediator, accordingly (for ancient Israel the Messiah or Christ, literally “the one anointed”), is thus either, i.e. indifferently, known as present, looked to as future or recalled as “having come”, whereby “even if we have known Christ after the flesh” (or as we do when reading of his immediate life) “we know him so no more”. We may add, if we wish, that this makes our use of “he” for Christ as “glorified” analogical or however we may wish to delimit religious language. Such variations of tense, meanwhile, do not alter the essential copula, as Aquinas says while, however, taking them up from the grammatical into the logical system, whereas idealism, the crucible in which it is and was ever religion’s destiny to be cast, simply dismisses them as phenomenal. Disagreements as to who was or will be or now is this mediator are thus, in a sense, incidental (see our fourth “note” here). This, though, is in no way a “reduction” of the immediate or historical mode of faith but rather a judgment, in the light of such

Studies 56 (1995), pp. 276-300. What Hegel gives, following in Eckhart’s footsteps, is the full reach of Christianity, of the Gospel, in “the ruin of the individual” in, however, its own universal universalisation, called in religion the body (of Christ) or “the priesthood of all believers”, reached or resolved, in a word, in faith, whereby “you stit with Christ in the heavenly places” and “time shall be no more”, a back-handed way of saying that it never was or, finally, is not. Here the saying, “no birth no death”, as much Judaeo-Christian as Buddhist, comes into its own. With the poet we already or ever knew it, not noticing though, perhaps, that “thou wast not born for death, immortal bird” *ipso facto* denies birth as well, insofar as this is opposed to a ceaseless generation, of and by self or other indifferently, Hegel’s logic shows.

antecedent faith along with, in tandem, all philosophy, upon the historical itself. On this we may consult *Enc.* 86, addition (2) – the remarks there, although treating of the history of philosophy “specifically”, in fact apply with equal force to “history” in general, “pragmatic” or more than so, which philosophy, specific only as universal of universals, necessarily annihilates as transforming it into a “Pantheon” for the history of philosophy specifically here at *Enc.* 86, yet history generally had already been compared to a “gallery of pictures” (*Phenomenology of Mind*, Baillie, p.807) in and with its “eternal and veritable present” where time-flow belongs strictly with the mode of observation, as itself a kind of “formal sign”, an *id quo*. It is time itself, that is, which is in question here.

“In God alone is my soul at rest”, as these things, this thesis, was anciently expressed, with the logical rider, in poetic form: “Though he slay me yet will I trust him”⁵. “Know yourself” and, just therefore and therein, know all. For why else would the Oracle have spoken so (to Socrates)? Otherness is not, since knowledge is absolute. The apparent reduction of religion to philosophy is the religious redemption of the latter, conquest in defeat, and the truth of and as revelation. *Agnosce o Christiane dignitatem tuam*, Augustine exclaims. Citing just this from this source implies here the thesis that it is revelation that comes to its own yet more perfect apprehension in Hegelian thought, as it once did in Augustine’s, apprehending thought, the Idea, as origin, as being, along with its necessarily innumerable (as “members one of another”) progeny. Such perfecting cannot have an end, being already, in all these moments, “realised end” (*Enc.* 212 add., but equally urged on *The Phenomenology of Mind*’s final page by way of *Erinnerung*, recollection, as *Science*, first

⁵ The words are from *Job*. It may astound that I say “logical rider”. It follows simply, however, from Hegel’s account of the first or immediate form of Absolute Spirit, which is art, as being later assumed into philosophy, and hence found logical, as Spirit’s final and hence all-embracing form. Art and religion, that is, do not merely “exist alongside” philosophy. They subsist in its concept even as logic and nature, though each differently, subsist in the Idea, the Absolute Idea which Hegel says is itself the Absolute (*Enc.* 213: “The definition which declares the Absolute to be the Idea is itself absolute”), as follows from there being no absolute composition of parts in infinity, as even each idea, as Aquinas, for example, had argued, is, must be, identical with the divine essence (Aquinas, *Summa theol.* Ia 15). Note that it is the art or religion itself that is thus declared logical, declared as a form of logic and not as merely a run-up to it, though not until “The Philosophy of Spirit” at the *Encyclopaedia*’s final section is this made plain. Thus art itself, or music, “is a greater revelation than the whole of religion and philosophy” (Beethoven), as the Idea Immediate, or life, is the ground and foundation for its own self-transcendence in living thought, the Idea or God.

of how knowledge “appears”, subsequently as absolute *scientia*., of itself as the Absolute). That alone is why Hegel, or Augustine, must ever be ceaselessly reinterpreted without thereby being rewritten, thus destroying re-thinking, such as we, or Hegel, would naturally bring to the Bible, as a possibility. It is in this way that Christians (and Jews too) read the “Old Testament” and ever have done so. It is exemplified within the pages of that old collection itself.

Further, *numeri non ponuntur in divinis* (Aquinas), “it is useless to count” (Hegel) angels or men or, supremely, divine persons, though they be three in syllogistic triad as founding this uselessness. Thus one arrives eventually, in confluence, at the Hegelian “system”, but only to go, already even, “further in and higher up”. Thus it is, was said, that “I, if I be lifted up, shall draw all men unto me”. Yet one might have preferred, to “all men”, as translation or interpretation indifferently, “everyone” or even “each one”, rather as, after “the feeding of the five thousand” (is this a counted number?) every crumb (counted?) had to be gathered up “so that nothing be lost”. Compare the “distributive” use of *omnis*, singular, in, for example, the universal affirmative syllogistic premise, “Every man or woman is an animal”. The plural, *omnes*, all men and women (either third declension terms is “common” in gender, i.e. both masculine and feminine), is not used.⁶ The progressive disencumbering of grammar in this way thus preserves recognition of sex-equality, whatever its disadvantages as disregarding a not always so essential difference (the dilemma of “co-education” of “boys and girls”, as of “monks and nuns”, both commonly “religious”: “and” is in general an undesirably enclitic term in philosophy⁷). Yet saying “everyone” could suggest something like “the working class”, for example. Thus every man (sc. human, *Mensch*) is an animal: though it might seem mere accident, again, that in Latin the masculine and feminine forms are not here, or in this “third declension”

⁶ This singularity, so to call it, is stressed by Maritain in his thought-provoking study: *An Introduction to Logic* (1930).

⁷ While the Dominicans created a “second order” for women (and even a third order of “tertiaries” for “lay” persons generally: Catherine of Siena was one such), St. Bridget, a century and a half or more later, devised the double monastery or convent, anticipating while exemplifying Swedish progressivism: the idea did not die, as what was distinguished from marriage reassumes it in sublation as, from the beginning even, “in Christ there is neither male nor female”. But of course there is. It is and must be, as always, the two that become one (and thus a third).

adjective, *omnis*, distinguished, as they are in “second declension” adjectives⁸, e.g. *bonus*, *bona*.

Each one, it is said, to revert to our main theme, will be, is being and/or has been thus “drawn” to the speaker or subject. History must have an axis, wherever we place it. Again, though, this is no reduction or “rationalisation” of faith but an evaluation, a dis-evaluation from a higher and richer standpoint, of finite history. “Greater things than I have done shall you do”, though in the power of that spirit I myself am sending (“I will be in you”) and hence am, the speaker might have added. Apart from anything else this is a comment upon time itself and hence logical or metaphysical. The axis, in fact, as and like the Idea, is everywhere or omni-operative. These perspectives, by the way, can help us better to understand certain claims made for “African philosophy” or for regional phenomena generally today.⁹

Can we then, in theology, as philosophy’s metaphysics, go on to speak, in consequence of the above, of “the hidden Christ”. If there is an or the “Hidden Christ of Hinduism” (Raymond Panikkar’s title) thus, then does not ecumenical theology demand that those acknowledging Christ as having come or as realised learn also to speak of him as hidden? Indeed they do speak of “the hidden life” (at Nazareth) or of him as once (but then surely always) “hidden in the bosom of the Father”, whence he “saw Satan falling from heaven”, for example. Or why not speak of the hidden Hindu, Zen or “new age” (anything new) element of Christianity, if our ecumenism is to be credibly consistent and is this idea consistent with Christianity (as Fr. Jamros rather questions)? Who were those “other sheep” Christ was represented, at least, as speaking of who were “not of this fold”? Can one limit this reference in *any* way?

⁸ In fact the grammatical category for nouns gets confused here, inasmuch, for example, as what we call second declension adjectives (if we do) have their feminine form as it is in the first declension of nouns only, with only the masculine and neuter in the second of these, while the neuter plural forms of both types of adjective are only partially distinguishable, both being formed by “-a” (this plural form in classical Greek, in fact, takes a singular verb: forms and their concepts are “momentary”). Hegelian or Heraclitan flow underlies, here too, grammar’s abstracted forms, so that abstracted speech is thus one with communication’s earliest and hence more complex mediation in abstract finitude or first plurification of the word. Plurality, that the different is not the same, as Hegel denies (*Phenomenology*, Baillie p.777, “The difficulty people find...”), is the first abstraction.

⁹ See, as example merely, my *Africa, Philosophy and the Western Tradition*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt 1994.

Choice of this last example would illustrate the wide or catholic (small c) view of finite cultures arrived at in our time though resisted by a large section of natural scientists, understandably in view of the great speeding up and amplitude of progress in representational knowledge in short space. Philosophy, however, can succeed in transcending this bias in the name, as always and for all its relative esotericism, of all, as is shown by W.V.O. Quine ("Two Dogmas of Empiricism") or, implicitly, by Peter Winch ("On Understanding a Primitive Society", referring to work in field anthropology), for example.

On the other hand one might need to say, to come to the insight consequent upon our meditation so far, that just as religion postulates its *kairos*, its Now when "the time has come", which philosophy, as Hegel claims, must subsequently make her own (the necessity in logic for an individual mediator: though we must then answer as to what is an individual non-abstractly considered), so, in human spiritual advance generally, there are analogically times of definite revelation, such as the first use of tools, including or extended to linguistic tools or signifiers, or the systematised insights of Freud or Darwin as reflecting back upon individual or race. These are analogical indeed, since time itself is an analogy of being, of eternity. It is for this reason that the postulate, as logically demanded, of an individual mediator, of his descent into time and "sense", along with the logical postulation of the sensuous or, rather, *Sinnlich* itself as the beginning of knowledge (*sensus est quaedam ratio*) and hence of repulsed and attracted "abstract" individuals generally, is forever to be distinguished from all phenomenal representation of the same (compare my remarks above upon this theme), as is our own eternal truth from our "here and now", that truth indeed founding nonetheless our apparent actions in the here and now as at once decisive for and declarative of our eternal destiny and truth. Here we instance the sublation (*Aufhebung*) of cause and effect, their preservation as a self-cancelling identity, as worked out in Hegel's logic, in logical thinking or dialectic. This is expressed succinctly in Scripture itself, recording or representing the mediator as saying: "Before Abraham was I am", while adding: "I am from above, you are from below". Philosophy, thus helped, by "religion" as well as, we add, by beauty too, or art in general, Beatrice or Sylvia who "excels each mortal thing upon the dull earth dwelling", rises to this level: "then when helped inhabits there". And the ladies? They too find a man to mediate (or sometimes another lady). The point is, each needs the other as self-identity in otherness, to be its self as and in all such others and/or otherness. Who, or what, is Sylvia? Hegel gives this answer. Yet for the finite spirit the necessary other is *ipso facto* the infinite, the *absolute*

beauty, the beautiful itself (i.e. not abstract but necessarily or constitutionally individualised). Nor is mutuality, of absorbing and absorbed, excluded or ruled out here, but rather demanded. The infinite consumes the finite in being itself, is thus “a consuming fire”.

The religious person is at first puzzled, at times angered, by this subsumption of his truth into a more final form of absolute spirit, which yet, says Hegel, operates for religion “and nothing but religion”. Thus, and in the same way, the artist at first may feel hostility to religion (and even contempt for philosophy) as wishing to rob him or her, it may seem, of the *matter* which is, he feels, his essential medium as itself subsumed into and never left behind in his creations, always therefore individual. But all such objections are dismissible as “growing pains”, as the outcome will and has proved. In reading a story, any story, our seeing through the letter to the spirit is precisely our absorption of and in the story. We become, in truly cathartic and enduring moment, those staged figures, recalling now that “all the world’s a stage”, including first century Palestine, the playwright being spirit, that “living spirit” which the “second Adam became”.

At this point, however, it may be asked whether religion has not herewith been exposed as useless, so to say. But, religion must come first, Hegel insists, without meaning it must then be dismissed. Philosophy, rather, is itself the highest service in worship, *höchste Gottesdienst*. Here service and worship are interchangeable, as offered to what is, as infinite, without needs and therefore to be adored, to be fallen down before., not ultimately in self-abhorrence but in self-annihilative subsumption, the “hating one’s life” of the Gospels.

This is the point of transfiguration, precisely, of the “light of common day”, the “dull earth”. For what is common is what, in a vivid comparison, Hegel says the animals thus declare to be nothing in eating it up, as they would eat up everything in (possible) sight if they got the chance, any one of them. We don’t, as piety too often imagines, depart from a supposed full-blooded finite world in order to give ourselves to specifically religious exercises and postures, on specific days, or just one, of the week or year. Therefore, we are saying, what is sought is not something far away but at hand, thus giving sense to the saying “Seek and ye shall find”, which otherwise makes nonsense of the notion of seeking in hope specifically. In walking we become the path awaiting us, as the possible becomes the actual, the free the necessary (or conversely). “Does the fish soar to find the ocean... Turn but a stone and you touch a wing”.

But will this not make God vanish, God as *contrasted* against all else, whom we have put as nothing, set at nought in fact? “Our God is a consuming fire”. That is just the answer contained in the question. Fire is

that one of the four ancient elements which alone transcends substance toward act. But still one can ask, why is there even so this actual semblance of a world other than God, this being of the phenomenon as such? It is contained in the Idea, answer, as alienated moments of thought, of itself, of self rather. Truth, says Hegel, to be truth, has to result. That is absurd, until he adds that he means its own result, thus transcending or “putting by” result as such in a speculative self-contradiction transcending mere absurdity. God, above all God, the Idea, doesn’t just happen (which means that nothing does). So the Idea is the dialectic, the method, which is therefore personal, the various persons we know being but analogies of it, of what they therefore regard as itself analogical. And so it is as treated in our finite speech, which thus must fall away. Wittgenstein is right here again (at *Tractatus* 7).

We may see this as nothing or as all. In a sense it makes no difference which, since this dilemma is necessarily posterior to the Idea. Thus being (and non-being) becomes more fully itself, more fully retained, in being thus transcended or “put by” (*aufgehoben*). Modern atheism, we might want to say, fruit of Christian and Judaic tradition and even of mind’s whole history, which mind transcends, thus rejoins, as do all such moments, “the bosom of the Father” in a common life where in being theists we are atheists and conversely, in view of the Absolute’s free unboundedness (in-finitude). This is the Hegelian facit. Nor should we suspect that this is a mere baptism or transfigured resumption of a previous language abstractly taken. This was not Plato’s attitude, as represented in his picture of Socrates, to even those myths he cites as normative¹⁰ if not as yet under our category of revelation. Here we have the primacy of the believing community as stressed by Hegel, a stress not reducible to some form of “pastoral theology”. We may refer it rather to the dictum, in form of a question: “Whoever does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” This is not some merely moral caution against pseudo-religiosity, as it is so often thoughtlessly taken, but rather a and the metaphysical truth, namely that a unity of persons is the Absolute’s necessary character, universality being the “principle of personality”, Hegel unerringly declares.

McTaggart’s is maybe the main attempt to establish dogmatic atheism upon idealist foundations, or is this not truer of Hume? McTaggart rather sought, contrariwise, to establish absolute idealism, to complete Hegel’s project, upon a presumed atheist foundation. He therefore retains the Idea

¹⁰ Cf. Joseph Pieper: *Über die platonischen Mythen*, a book short enough to be read at a sitting.

as cornerstone, but expounds it as identical with the perfect unity of all persons in one system¹¹, Hegel's Trinitarian project, in a word, but with an indistinct number of persons. We, on the other hand, have situated such persons within, as each and all making up a differentiated identity with, the Idea, the Word (in a word) as anterior logically to them and therefore causally or, rather, logically anterior indifferently. Is this necessary?

I answer yes, simply because or, rather, inasmuch as, McTaggart's community is not infinite and in that respect not perfect. He insists, it appears, on the separateness of each person, in a way that Hegel might have called "abstract", though he is known to have allowed for "reincarnation", a picture-concept inasmuch as including time whereas, as I have argued elsewhere, it might just as well include a plurality of incarnations, individuations, simultaneously in different parts of space (or even in the same part!) "at the same time". This, analysis will show, leaves us, again, with a finite and therefore less than perfect universe or world, i.e. if it loses its character as purely and simply "moment" of the Idea that it has in Hegel, whereas McTaggart insists that reason requires that the world, by which he means the all and even, it seems, existence itself, shall be perfect. For Hegel existence, as distinct from the final being which is the Idea, is a mere finite category, again, while on the theist conception as endorsed by Hegel, on the other hand, the Trinity, which McTaggart hardly considers, though Hegel dubs it the only rational conception of God¹², forms the perfect community, into which, in differentiated but universal identity, all persons are assumed (*aufgehoben*), really from the beginning inasmuch as the end is ever necessarily realised. So their being

¹¹ Apart from his main, so to say post-Hegelian work, *The Nature of Existence* (1927), see McTaggart's *Studies in the Hegelian Cosmology* of 1901, Chapter Two, "Immortality". for his most concisely economical if taxing argumentation on this point.

¹² Hegel's estimate of Judaism developed positively from negative beginnings. His final view would imply, in view of the above statement, that ancient Israel's monotheism was implicitly or potentially Trinitarian, as would be that "potential" idea of God, the potentiality to conceive God, all have, Hegel concurs with Plato (in *Meno* especially) in saying, as "innate" or, more exactly, constitutive of mind. For Hegel's nuanced view here consult *Enc.* 67 along with the addition on Plato, Descartes "and the Scotch philosophers"; "development is another word for mediation", by education especially, he stresses. Innate ideas would thus be the possibility, "mere capacity", for such mediation, as witness in the first instance the divine paideia of Israel and the surrounding world culminating, as history's caesura, in word and action of the Word itself. Thus Jaspers, like Newman, argued rightly for the necessity of such a caesura, though they differed as to its identification.

assumed as “moments” is in any case what they are. This is “the ruin of the individual” as of immediate Life itself, “his life in this world” which religion bids a person to “hate”. This is not mere “Semitic hyperbole” as is at times claimed but the pictured representation, vivid or living enough, of metaphysical insight, finally of “absolute knowledge”, as life itself, as we “experience” it, is nothing other than such a picture, we might add, of the true or mutually self-conscious “life” of Spirit. It remains an error, however, as being a finite picture or representation, again, to view this without modification as “predestination”, thus absolutising time and the finite, unless awareness of the purely logical priority here is retained, as it may be via the “dead metaphor” or use of pre-. Such metaphors are ineradicable from language as work of the human but phenomenally finite tongue or vocal apparatus. If persons had to be thus predestined then the end would in any case not be eternally realised and we would be forced to the impossible theological task of constructing, as I once heard Peter Geach doing, a theology of the divine intentions, with the implication of present unfulfilment it carries, even if one likens God to an infallible chess-player able to pick in advance the square on which he will later checkmate his opponent. Such a theatre debarring surprises, from the divine viewpoint, makes God a poor dramatist in place of being infinite drama or “drama itself”. Every form, after all, is infinite in virtue of its union in identity with the “form of forms”, thus creating out of nothing.

So although a McTaggartian collection of spirits, however much mutually integrated, left to themselves must fall short of infinitude or perfection, this same collection absorbed and by absolute goodness ever diffused merely confirms the overflowing necessity of, precisely, infinity, the one truth and perfect good. Can McTaggart overcome this difficulty? I am not sure that he could not. He could flatly say that his community of spirits IS the Idea, in its perfect unity, while the problem of an infinite or finite number (of spirits) he could defuse and possibly has defused by making his community itself the Idea, all in one and one in all, just like the Trinity in that. The only problem is that it is not this. Even if we posit all and each as eternally existing yet this is by the free “decree” (as it is often pictured) or knowing of or by, as entirely dependent upon, a necessity of divine or infinite love as the necessity of the Idea, which such freedom underpins *logically* or establishes. Necessity in itself is freedom’s absolute development conceptually, Hegel shows. “This truth of necessity, therefore, is *Freedom* (*Enc.* 158, cp. 147). Infinite freedom establishes, *is*, precisely necessity. It is not a falsely infinitised “liberty of indifference” (which anyhow, in its fourteenth century version, as abstracted from reason, can never be, even in finite form, actual), is thus not arbitrary. The

“absolute power of God” was never more than a finite abstraction from intellect, comparable to the notion of God as force that Hegel criticises in Herder (*Enc.* 136). For it to be otherwise, transcending this conceptual finitude, each spirit, all spirit, severally or together, must be identical, not just in difference, but in coincidence *with being itself* as, we may now say, self-othering freedom or diffusive goodness (as in Hegel’s two versions of his logic, as compared, Volition and “the Idea of the Good” are equivalently the category penultimate to the Absolute Idea..

Thus it is that Aquinas says that without analogy all would coalesce in one, as indeed it does, but in differentiation, precisely by analogy. The one and the many are not two, that is to say. As regards McTaggart’s fear, or main objection to this conception’s rationality, that an omnipotent but, as he still conceives it, external God could at any moment choose to destroy us or me, this is the very objection I met earlier on here, that self-consciousness is self-guaranteeing, whether we see ourselves as godlike or Satanic (he, Lucifer, is also put as godlike) indifferently. Could this though, this identity, be the dignity that Augustine asked us to acknowledge? It may perhaps be so, may be logically conceivable. Then in that case I, or you¹³, am or are God, we really are, each of us. Hence the idea of God, the idea that the Idea is God, will not have been destroyed, even for McTaggart. Neither though would I then be God’s free *invention*, so to say, but rather a moment in the necessity of logic or, it is the same, of that universe dimly descried by some physicists where every possibility, and McTaggart argues that this means exclusively every possible person, is necessarily actualised and finds its, his or her place in the whole which would not be without it, as Eckhart had said of himself *vis à vis* God, here the Idea. All dreams of joy must thus and then be found welling up from within and this is that grace identified earlier as “closer to self than self” (*intimior me mihi*), as a rational necessity. “I have loved you with an everlasting love”: this we may call pictured or philosophical, depending upon our account of love, not directly a Hegelian category, as McTaggart complains, but clearly indispensable to the system (cp. *Enc.* 159, as just one example: Hegel was keen to avoid what he called, as I recall, sickeningly empty edification, but he cannot help being edifying here and there.

We may say that the case of McTaggart illustrates that absolute freedom of the Idea upon which Hegel insists, disconcertingly as it may seem. We find place for this self-proclaimed atheist as there is for the amiable Hume, mindful of the Hegelian dictum, well-grounded, that “all judgments are false”. “Whereof one cannot speak...” Is this what is

¹³ Cp. Daniel Kolak, *I am You*, Pomona, New York.

implied in the ancient (Jewish) tradition that the name of God is not to be, because it cannot be, spoken? “He that has seen me has seen the Father”, a man once said. Have we plumbed the depths of that utterance? Yet, again, McTaggart would not have been able consistently to say it, of himself for example (or to allow anyone else to say it), in any possible world. Or would he? I pose this question from the standpoint of an adherence to the first article of the Christian creed, *viz.* “I believe in God”. This creed goes on to characterise God as “maker” of heaven and earth. Philosophers and theologians, and saints even, do not scruple, nor did Plato, to differentiate this divine title from carpentry, say, and so at times we must do no more and no less with the First Substance itself. In what do we believe when we thus affirm faith in what is, under one and the same instance, “of faith” and yet, or just therefore, knowledge, knowable by “natural” reason, ever graced, as the Church and its doctors and councils teach?

Hegel’s intention here was not to lapse into a mere two-dimensional agnosticism, of not knowing as against knowing, which is itself a dogmatic stance. It was rather to lift our notion of knowledge from the finite to the infinite, quite the reverse project. In this he was a fore-runner of the “ecumenical movement” among Christians, brought to the forefront of consciousness especially within Protestantism, as it seems, in the person of the Swedish and Lutheran archbishop Nathan Söderblom, his “first” or “Christian” baptismal name recalling Lessing’s greatest drama, early on in the twentieth century, while later, if with a kind of reluctance, it was taken up by Catholicism, affirmation of it, in solemn decree, being the nearest thing to a dogmatic definition, as it were supra-dogmatically as described above, that the Second Vatican Council of 1962-1964 produced.¹⁴

Supra-dogmatically, I say, as establishing in the sense of confirming and perfecting a way of thinking and of being, therefore, unacceptable to those miscalled fundamentalists, meaning by this term those who take dogmas literally or in a univocal, material sense exclusively. They should rather be called not fundamentalists but literalists, as being those adhering to the letter that kills, while the spirit gives life, a saying from the Gospels that I have refrained from citing directly or “to the letter”! This adherence, moreover, is what is attacked also by those who make war on religious dogma as such, not seeing that such dogma is irreducibly analogical¹⁵ and

¹⁴ The then reigning Pope, now venerated as Saint John the Twenty-Third (Angelo Roncalli), had lain down at the Council’s opening that autumn of 1962 that there were to be no more dogmatic definitions. Something epochal, this suggests, was definitely afoot.

¹⁵ This is in fact a truth dogmatically identified at one of the twelfth century General Councils of the Lateran, where it is declared that the unlikeness of God to

hence subject to a multitude of developmental moments, precisely thus making up one infinite and perfect Idea, one reaching back indeed, as in logic it must, also and even principally, to this ever-developing doctrine of development of doctrine, whether Christian or, as thus supposed at least, other. The doctrine, not only Newman's, of development of doctrine, it is entailed, must itself develop. This yields a benign infinite regress, to the sublation all the same of doctrine itself in infinite knowledge, where no man says to another: "Know the Lord" (*Jeremiah*). "Other sheep I have that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, that there may be one fold, one shepherd", one man says meanwhile. This, we may add, is the vision of many of today's foremost economists ("globalisation"), appropriately inasmuch as in theology one speaks of an "economy of salvation", while within economics pressure for a more adequate theory of happiness, to the point of the satisfaction of all want, is increasingly applied.

In sapiential or philosophical terms this nest of notions is expressed as the Hegelian "second order" judgment that "all judgments are false". It is in deep accord when McTaggart affirms that we "make no judgments in heaven". What abides, as supra-phenomenal, is what he calls perception, for the falsity of perception stressed by Hegel or Plato lies not in the act but in its object, as the essentially fleeting non-object open to an equally phenomenal sense-perception, though, nonetheless, *qua* perception even this may be called *quaedam cognitio* (Aquinas), a type (the first[^]) of knowing within what Kant might call, in a nonetheless misleading metaphor, misleading if meant as more than an analogy, the "realm" of sense. There is just one realm, of spirit, taking up into itself all such moments of falsity into one and true "all in all" or Idea absolute. Thus also for Hegel the "realm" of sense, the sensible, bears the aspect of a foundation for all else, inclusive of its own transcendence by "ungrateful spirit". Every and any bush is "a burning bush". This is its form, or Form

creatures is greater than any possible likeness. This coincides with Hegel's estimate of the evil of the finite as such. "There is none good but God". What follows further is Wittgensteinian silence. Yet philosophers, like birds, trees and flowers, say, do not cease to "speak by silences", their verbosity notwithstanding. Philosophy, that is, defines itself in pointing away from itself, as *sophia* is, thus, "its own result". "This do and thou shalt live" – analogy itself is thus "irreducibly analogical", like dogma, as we noted above. Or, this is the finitude of language, if we recall now that analogy is a *logical* doctrine, identifying a species of equivocation, namely, in "informal fallacy". It cannot though, as many have wished, be banished from philosophy as final science. It is a matter of the eclipse of the Understanding by or within the Speculative as mind indeed.

simply, even “the analogy of being”, without which all things would “coalesce in one” (Aquinas), as, in a sense, monism shows, they do.

This is the element of deep truth in Hume’s philosophy, that he begins and ends with perception, though of that defective or fleeting kind he calls “impressions”, only able to be recalled as “ideas”, their faint copies. Hence Hume felt able to rebut the objections of those asserting self-contradiction in his thought, since his thought, like Hegel’s in this, was an attack upon that same Aristotelian rather than Platonic principle of non-contradiction, except as it formed part of a finite “human nature”. Plato had already spoken of “things... which both are and are not” and we have to have an ontology or anti-ontology of such “objects”, corresponding in this respect as they do to the intellectual or sensible species of Aristotle, Aquinas or Poinso¹⁶ (*signum formale*) whereby “things” (*res*) are truly known while remaining themselves unknowable, not subject to knowledge, even or especially as absolute, in themselves, since they are not in themselves but “are” the “that by which” only, strictly comparable with Hegel’s falsity or error, the negative reality, so to say (though as evil he calls it “sham-being”, but a sham *is* a sham, an *ens rationis* at least), from which truth, in virtue of its own essential nature, must result, as he puts it. That is, for Plato or Hegel the things, objects, function as do the formal signs of Poinso¹⁶ or the intelligible species of Aristotelian realists in general. One sees and/or understands through them, as through the retinal image, though this latter is of course itself physically real, though not held to be ultimately “real”, actual, by Platonists or Hegelians. A formal sign or sign as such, however, would be a purely logical entity, residing moreover in the subject as a or the concept. That is the tie-up with Hegel.

It is part of this account of things, however much McTaggart may or may not have kept this in sight, that the things of sense, the contingent, the false, are ever preserved, taken up as moments, “when that which is perfect is come”, within the Absolute Idea, that is to say, as all history is housed in the indeed spiritual museum of its full and final intelligibility and, for that matter, justification, as the fully factual and/or “normative”. In this way the history of philosophy, “known all at once”, is in fact or truly the philosophy of history and conversely. Both are the collective yet unified content of that “pantheon” or “gallery of pictures”, a mutually convertible image Hegel employs for both these convertible instances

¹⁶ Jean Poinso (1589-1644), thus roughly contemporary with Descartes, better known by his name in religion (he was a Dominican), John of St. Thomas. Much in Maritain’s writing, on logic or on knowledge especially, derives from him. See my article “John of St. Thomas” in *Handbook of Metaphysics and Ontology*, Munich 1991, Vol. 1, pp.413-414.

(*Enc.* 86, add.(2); *Phenomenology of Mind*, Baillie p.807, i.e. the penultimate page). Here “slow procession” gives way to the more “objective” truth of a simultaneously or supra-temporal gallery. It is only we who, in imperfect spirit, are thus “slow”, thus processing (through the gallery) in the inherent defectiveness of motion or changing as exposed by Aristotle (*Physics* III) in redemption of Zeno’s paradoxes. Music, we might mention here, absolutises time¹⁷, as philosophy, Hegel claims, in effect, absolutises religion. The one (person) proceeding becomes the path proceeded, the subject the object. By this, though, any one, mite or “grain of sand” though he be, becomes, as guest of the gallery, the whole. But I don’t want to be accused of “over-stating” my case, supposing one ever could over-state this case of the true.

In saying all this then I affirm that any dogma of faith lies open not maybe to any and all thinkable presentations as interpretation but to an infinite multitude, or perhaps rather “maxitude”, of interpretation upon interpretation without end. This applies also, of necessity, to any interpretation laid down or “defined”. It does not and surely is not meant to stop the process, the proceeding, which is spirit itself. Also, and in reverse, not one “jot or tittle” of any previous understanding is finally cancelled, provided we recall that not every assertion constitutes an understanding. Thus all the old themes, such as creation, law, sacrifice, sin, love or God, remain but as in a state of progressively hermeneutic transfiguration without end. In this case, in this spirit, even that necessary mediator, as for instance Hegel protagonised him, declared to his followers: “Greater things than I have done shall you do”, adding though that he would be with them and in them “till the end of the world”, the *saeculum* and, it is surely presumed, for ever. It is thus also declared there, though this is not often noted, that those followers will be there too, with him the mediator, for the same space or “for ever”. In fact the text has “I am with you”, *vobiscum sum*, a verity multifariously confirmed throughout the Johannine and Pauline writings and implicit in the “synoptic” gospels with their doctrines of substitution in identity, announcing Hegel, Trinitarianism and all “philosophy of spirit” while looking back to as

¹⁷ One might think here of Moussorgsky’s piano piece (orchestrated later by Ravel), *Pictures at an Exhibition*, or of Mozart’s claim to have heard his individual works, before making the notation, “all at once”. One might further think of the supra-temporal character of fully absorbed “listening” as an instance (according, by implication, to *Enc.* 159) of “thinking” in “blessedness”, comparable even to Max Tegmark’s contemplation, through the time when he wrote his book of that name or similar, of “our mathematical universe”, equivalently our musical universe, as it was for Kepler, Hindemith and not a few others.

fulfilling the previous “law and the prophets” or indeed looking sideways at anything else going on, having gone on or about to go on.

The conclusion from this study is what was assumed or known from the beginning, namely that the analogy of being has a being of its own and that that being is itself analogous. Language, in other words is not, was not and cannot ever be an absolute. Hence the logic of Hegel, like any logic that succeeded but also like the “analytics” of Aristotle, rooted in Platonic thought with its recourse to myth, “cannot say what any thing is”.¹⁸ This, accordingly, is the foundation of silence as a kind of virtue or spiritual gift in the reflection that “God has spoken only one Word” (St. John of the Cross, *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*). This is the facet of Hegel’s multifarious account of “the mystical... whereof one cannot speak” (Wittgenstein). Hegel’s account of this ineffability, however, constitutes Speculative Science, which is indeed “the science of logic”, of *logos* or speaking as, finally, of that one word, that Idea, in free necessity, which is, he says, itself the Absolute. The searching out of such a science, he says in effect, in a claim having Anselmian roots, is demanded as postulated by just such a claim, that God, namely, has revealed himself and is therefore to be known, is knowable, absolutely, even, it would follow, as the in principle unknown, “who dwells in light unapproachable” (St. Paul). This claim, of course, is in harmony with the main theses and conclusions of Hegel’s logic, such as that “all judgments are false” or that, again, “the moments as much are as they are not”. “This is eternal life, to know God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent”. Hegel makes the whole of this twofold claim his own, refusing to abstract from it in what would, he considers, be a false finitisation of philosophy or, equivalently, a real finitisation falsifying philosophy. Or, we might add here, “Jesus Christ” becomes the name of divine or absolute sending, unique just in its multifacetedness as such (it includes sending to “other sheep”), into that nothingness of the finite with which God can have no real relation (Aquinas). It is a matter of the irreducibly analogical character of absolute

¹⁸ Henry Veatch’s characterisation, in negative judgment, of so-called “mathematical logic” as expressed, without my stress on “say” though, as the title of Chapter One of his *Two Logics*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston 1969, viz. “A Logic That Can’t Say What Anything Is”. He italicises the indefinite article in order, it seems, to stress the abstractly individual particularity of such a logic, however, whereas we claim such negativity to have been a property of speech and thus essential to philosophy, and *a fortiori* to logic, from its and their beginnings. This is the true meaning of Scotistic and other rejections of analogy, inclusive of recent restrictions of analogy to logic or speech under the banner of an in my view misapplied “Thomism”.

knowledge, in a knowing of self which is simultaneously a knowing of the absolute other as yet the same, without reduction, since even self is thus analogically known. The self, we might then go on to say, is precisely that which is to be known in its very unknowability. Knowing, that is, is itself a finite term, though it “knows”, according to its mode, both finite and infinite.

Hegel thus, as the “new Aristotle”, reinstates *theologia* as philosophy’s own intrinsic crown, headpiece and constitutive form, thus first bringing scientific clarity to the notion of grace as itself knowledge or the reasonable, of the gratuitous or free as final necessity, founded, he claims, in a mutual forgiveness that is one with the absorption of the finite by the infinite. He thus refuses absolutely to abstractly individualise absolute mind, the Idea, to divorce the many from the one that is in the three, the (syllogistic) three in the one, while the three, precisely as in or one with the one, are thus not “counted”. *Numeri non ponuntur in divinis*, numbers are not posited in divine things (Aquinas), even or especially not the number one. Metaphysical or final “logical” unity is more absolute than any such finite arithmetical notion, while the word *logos* points, again, to the absorption and simultaneous putting by of language by thought as the latter’s own achievement in “the science of logic”.

Since, however, this conclusion is necessarily put, as by Hegel himself for example, as the conclusion of philosophy itself the question remains as to what might be the relation between this assertion of the ineffable concerning which, in itself, nothing can be said, i.e. that is what we know, absolutely, and the Kantian thing-in-itself, viewed by Hegel as the *caput mortuum* of abstraction of which nothing can be known. Here, again, we must not forget “the character of thought, where the moments as much are as they are not, - are only the process which is Spirit” (*Phenomenology of Mind*, p.777). “It is this spiritual unity”, where the distinctions are transcended, which is “that atoning reconciliation spoken of as above”, i.e. first as “pardon” or forgiveness. This, namely, is “the character of thought” as, supremely, “the universality of self-consciousness”. This now, in philosophical thinking, “no longer figurative”, was and is thought’s preparation, centred here around the work of Hegel, for today’s “ecumenical movement” as, at least, one of its founding moments. It is this unity which today’s, or tomorrow’s, self-consciousness “has turned back into”, the perpetual “bringing” in process of “other sheep” who yet, like Immanuel Kant here, themselves come as much as or in their being brought, as the one first (and last) coming was the one sent. “I do nothing of myself”, all these figures, Hegel at the forefront, declare, the music necessarily conceiving while developing itself along with developing its

own developmental form. Form is itself self-transforming in essence which is thus not essence only but the Idea, a mutually illuminating freedom and necessity. “Be still and know that I am God”, since “the essential Being is from the start reconciled with itself” (Hegel, *op. cit.* pp. 778-779). From this stillness alone does true science proceed, living water flowing from the belly of the one drinking it. “Thinking means a liberation” (Hegel, *Enc.* 159).

Inasmuch as the above may seem to conflict with the at times overstressed “rationalist” aspect of Hegel’s project one need simply recall that Absolute Knowledge is the prerogative of the Idea itself with which any developed self-consciousness, as Hegel outlines it, becomes identified. Thus he preserves the truth that only God knows himself in the sense of comprehending (absolute knowledge) himself. For that is what it means to be God and is the ground for the rationalists’ dismissal of this notion, the very idea thereof, one might say, I hope not too mischievously, seeing as I claim that God is the Idea and conversely. You can’t get hold of it, the notion of it, otherwise. This is the fact that “other worlds” philosophy (not to mention physics) is now wrestling with, along with the modalities (*sic*) of possibility and necessity. This is precisely that eternal life characterised as “to know God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent”, i.e. as a form of knowledge, which would thus be a case, given the Christian doctrines at least, of God himself knowing his own Word or self as other as self over again. In and into that we, as moments, participate and are absorbed without trace of mutuality, absorbed, that is, into eternal life, the true life we never left, inasmuch as it does not leave itself. The whole of nature, as moment, is appearance, at one in that with those resurrection appearances, which are not in themselves resurrection or *the* resurrection. This, it seems, was recognised by, for example, the Marcan stream in early Christianity, while no judgment either way is implied here.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

FREEDOM AND NECESSITY IN ABSOLUTE MIND

In the texts on logic Hegel states more than once that freedom and necessity are ultimately the same. Copleston, in his history of philosophy, in the second of his three chapters on Hegel (Vol. 7), explores this as a difficulty, for him at least, in regard to Hegel's account of the relation between God and creation. He comes to no conclusion, pointing rather to a "certain ambiguity in Hegel's posture", in a way similar to those embarrassed by Hegel's frequent mention of God. He seems to think that the final paragraph of the *Encyclopaedia* Logic, about the Idea's resolving or deciding to "go forth freely as Nature", can only be a concession to "the religious conscience". His reason for this seems to be that the Idea, as such cannot "ontologically" do anything. He cites, therefore, Schelling's criticism that from ideas "only" come ideas, that it is "very difficult" to deduce an existing world from an idea.

Difficulties, though, are neither here nor there. Hegel says clearly, his whole analysis of logic as dialectical speculation behind him, that "the Absolute Idea is the Absolute" and contrariwise. He also treats Existence as a merely finite category, on a par with "the Thing", a stage of thought, that is to say, on thought's way to this absolute. In fact even Nature and Spirit, which succeed upon Logic in his system, remain thoughts, or thought. Mind is thus the negation of ontology if, but only if, the latter is put as the antithesis of the merely ideal.

For in Hegel this is not the case or, rather, is only the case with a difference. Only the Absolute is, has being measuring up to its idea as the Idea. Everything else, as failing to do this, is finite and hence merely ideal. Thus he explicates the Platonic paradox in regard to the things, all "material" things for a start, which "both are and are not", the paradox corresponding to Copleston's two forms of discourse, the philosophical and the religious or "pictured". This, therefore, appears to be misapplied here. For Hegel the things immediate consciousness takes as concrete, finite things are merely ideal, whereas the things such consciousness treats

of as ideas only, or even mere words sometimes, are spirit, which is reality. This is the basic posture in fact of philosophy and religion equally. It cannot be a picture to say that nature comes from the Idea as identical, in difference, with it. This, identity in difference, is rather Hegel's most fundamental philosophical thesis. Copleston's unexamined adherence to the notion of an "efficient cause", on the other hand, quite ignoring Hegel's placing of such a category as a stage in the dialectic, whereby cause and effect become identified as negatively equal, seems here obtruded. From Hegel's viewpoint, if not the Thomistic, it appears as finite picture. In accordance with this assumption the Hegelian critique of existence, as a term, a category, unworthy of the Idea, has to be ignored. For the final being, Hegel says in effect, is not this, not merely supreme within the class of existents.

McTaggart seems to have chosen to ignore this insight of Hegel's when entitling his major work *The Nature of Existence*. Yet this is mere optical illusion, so to say. The nature of McTaggart's existence is one with Hegel's as negating or inverting what we immediately take as existence. It is, rather, "inexistence" as transcending things concerning which one can contrast their actual existence, favourably or unfavourably, with their mere or non-actual idea. In Hegel this is better called being, ultimately no less and no other than the Absolute, which is the Idea. The Idea, in fact is, uniquely, being. For Hegel this is the triune God, transcending all enumeration as that with whom (or which) all self-consciousness is identified in its individual difference. For McTaggart, similarly, it is the unity of all persons, again transcending enumeration inasmuch, just for instance, as reincarnation is allowed for. The near approach of these two accounts to one another had found expression previously in Eckhart's "If God were not, I would not be, while if I were not then God would not be", a thought eliciting this Dominican father's exclamation, hard upon the heels of St. Thomas Aquinas: "By God, this is the truth!"

In these respects Hegel's thought is a development of the thought of Anselm, whom he cites. For Anselm the existence, even the being of God, is included as just one of the Idea's perfections. So it must be, he concludes in an only apparent circle, that the Idea (the infinite all-perfect God) exists. Thus he inverts ontology, or that being we call the world. Hence Hegel's approving reference to "acosmism". "A philosophy which affirms that God and God alone is, should not be stigmatised as atheistic" (*Enc.* 50). One could apply this judgment equally to his own thought for doing the same and, I dare affirm, one might even extend the principle to a system such as McTaggart's, self-proclaimedly atheistic though it be. Or, atheism, properly explicated, is now today no stigma but rather the

unfolding of theism in accordance with Hegel's exposition of logic as itself dialectical and hence speculative. This would be justified in terms of Hegel's logical theses, advanced with emphasis first in *The Phenomenology of Mind*, as exhibiting contradiction as the very form of predication, "God", in fact, being the example first taken..

Our topic, though, is freedom and necessity, to which the above is mere preliminary background. If we speak of "the logical idea" as itself manifested in nature, we have to ask about the "ontological status" of the logical idea "or of the Absolute" in itself, Copleston asserts, adding that there is "no doubt" that we have to do this. Well, we can certainly go along with it. Hegel states elsewhere that the logical forms are the very form of the world. This would suggest that the Idea is not modified or "reduced" by calling it logical, even though in another sense Hegel implies this just in his saying the Idea "goes forth" as Nature, to return as "Spirit", this being the very frame, which he asserts is Trinitarian, of his system as such.

Copleston asks (in the account of Hegel in his *History of Philosophy*), with a certain anguish perhaps: is the Idea, this Absolute "in itself", a reality existing independently of the world and manifesting itself to itself in it, or not? There is, though, certainly a picture element here also, one may point out, in the phrase "existing independently". Does the Word exist independently of the incarnate Christ, or Christ independently of the Word, to illustrate our point from a "higher" instance? Orthodoxy both affirms and denies this, while admitting some surface contradictions. A similar care should be shown here. We have but to beware of a "confusion of idioms (*idiomas*)". Thus Copleston adds, as second question, if the answer to the first, above, is affirmative, how can you have an idea that subsists? So for him there was no real or other than rhetorical first question, it might seem. Hegel, however, states as a conclusion: "The definition, which declares the Absolute to be the Idea, is itself absolute" (*Enc.* 213).

If one will but consider then one must see that the free and the necessary must coincide, and hence mutually cancel one another, in God as infinite. Or, better, one may, with Thomas Aquinas, distinguish, already in the ethical sphere, a necessity inherent in perfected freedom from the finite necessity of coercion (*coactio*), as being the necessity of what is needed to attain the end. This end, however, Hegel shows in both his accounts of *The Science of Logic*, is realised. The necessity of things is their being, is, hence, the Idea. Copleston seems to falsely oppose the "ontological" to this, as if even God would be compelled, as it were extrinsically, *to be*. This is not, however, what is meant classically by talk

of necessary being. God is indeed, and has to be, one with the freedom of his decisions, and no wedge can be driven between philosophy and religion at this point. It is not, that is to say, a picture merely. Every necessity is fruit of the divine freedom. Otherwise, impossibly, there are two gods, two Ideas. "If I were not, God would not be." This is expressed in religion by the saying: "I have loved you", as he loves himself, "from before the foundation of the world", i.e. eternally. I do not exist apart from such loving and choice; nor is this predestination. It is present reality, ever new.

*

When we reason in the opposite direction to the natural attitude, seeing animals, for example, as deriving from (the idea of) human nature, or putting the child as father to the man, this should not be seen as a backwards phenomenalism merely, not a reversal of perception at the same level as the old. The old still stands, in its time and place. It is a matter of seeing things backwards simultaneously, as the child should become what he then is. Thus it is quite "natural" to be possessed of the insight that "Before Abraham was I am"; the speaker may be Christ or any subject, inclusive of Abraham himself. This is to expose the error of those theologians, such as Küng and Rahner, regrettably, who state that Christian belief entails change in God. Before I was I am. I was not born and do not die. But of course I was, I do, but from the standpoint of correctness only, the truth, rather, being "No birth no death", as logic can show. By this, events as a class belong, without exception, to the field, the "realm", of correctness only. Thus those theologians, Küng at least, are led on to transfer to historicity the status of a transcendental predicate of the class of one, many, true, good or beautiful. This, though, can apply only to history transfigured, as we find on the final page of *The Phenomenology of Mind*, where history is no longer a temporal figure but that telescopic gallery of forms of which Hegel speaks there.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

GOD, IDEA, PROCESS

Mind, God, of course, does not really become anything. This explains why the dialectic ends by sublating *itself* above all. In the light of this truth alone can Hegel say that the end is as such and in itself ever realised. Two processes, all the same, are represented.

For the first, mind produces contradictions, making up the finite, in order to overcome them as result. We indeed who perceive, and hence misperceive, phenomena, are ourselves phenomenal and are so to ourselves most immediately, which, this appearance is itself a phenomenon. These contradictions, inclusive of our initial selves, both are and are not, i.e. they are not as is first disclosed in and by developed self-consciousness, as and inasmuch as Hegel himself develops this term, always (concretely) universal. For in philosophy, as spirit surveying the whole (that is itself), self-consciousness has in itself become conscious of itself. Nor is this to be identified with the abstract individual(s) that mind first abstractly posits as philosophising. They are in being as what is not. This is the contingent. Thus Hegel, once graduating from dialectic to the speculative mode, becomes one with the “mystical” writers (*Enc.* 82 add.), or they with him in this regard, as he sees them. Precisely in this becoming, accordingly, he and his writing are themselves phenomenal. Only in the Spirit (*Geist*), inseparably as it is manifested in each of its moments, is this moment of mind (*Geist*), that the man Hegel represents, to be found, as absorbed in universal “recollection” (*Erinnerung*), inclusive of his own. In joining the unity, the body, we *rejoin* what we have never left, since this belongs to that unity itself, the *reditus* to the *exitus*. That apart, man as man is “but dust” and less than dust, as dust is less than itself. God, the Idea, is, as one of his or its moments, the System or Method, while in himself entirely simple. Hegel might appear to deny this latter thesis, but only when he is considering an abstract simplicity. The final or concrete simplicity, which is logically first, however, transcends and includes all the plenitude of composition. Infinity, thought shows, can be no less than this while remaining infinity. A limit, taken from nowhere or fictitious, would otherwise be set.

Thus Nature too is, has to be, a moment of the Concept, set as a “route”, for us, to Absolute Knowledge, to be swallowed up by “ungrateful Spirit”, as it all the while is, “all in all”. Spirit can thus have no real relation to Nature, of which it is pictured as “crown”. Creation not merely does not add to but makes no difference to God, Aquinas for one claims, understanding, though remaining a seeming “realist”, that God, the “divine essence” rather¹, is only related to his, her or its own ideas, including the idea and ideas indifferently of natural things or of you or me by a relation of identity with each and any such idea. That is, he has no real *relation* to them as if he were one of them. That is, only the Absolute Idea is truly or *the* Idea. From this there follows the identity of the particular, as of the individual, with the universal in what Hegel claims is the true syllogism. Such a relation, then, is not a real relation at all, but a “relation of reason” only, as it was called, i.e. a pretended relation in and with those of the Trinity itself, to which Hegel refers, therefore, as “love playing with itself” (surely a conscious echo of the Solomonic *Book of Proverbs*, where we read of wisdom “playing before the throne of God”). This, these all, these identities in their differences as moments, as subjects and predicates, are *the* logical relation, the undergirding principle of system whereby, even, the Idea shall go and hence goes “forth freely as Nature”.² Hegel, we know, was drenched, as drenching himself, in Scripture, like Kant before him in this. The Idea, speaking generally, just is, and yet is not, since even the bare term “is” does not remain unaffected by this conception of it as entirely each and any individual. “This also is thou, neither is this thou”, since “what you do to the least of these you do to me”, spoken by a man as being, hence, of humanity’s essence, proper to each one, mediated so as to be appropriated by all for all. “Love one another”, writes one thus first appropriating. For “as the father has sent me, so send I you”. So Hegel declares, identifies and not merely represents the necessary mediation at *The Phenomenology of Mind*, VII C, where he says also that

¹ Cf. Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* Ia, Q15.

² See our *Philosophy or Dialectic?*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt, 1994, chapters four (earlier version: “Reality the Measure of Logic and not Vice Versa”, in *International Philosophical Quarterly*, June 1988, pp. 185-193) and five (earlier version: “Does Realism Make a Difference to Logic?”, in *The Monist*, April 1986, pp. 281-295). On the inherence of the form as identity cf. Aquinas: *In I Perihermeneias*, lect. 5, no. 22: “For *is*... without qualification means *to be in act*... is indifferently the actuality of every form... Hence.... when we wish to signify that any form or act actually inheres in any subject we signify it by this verb *is*...” Cp., as to *meaning*> “Nothing *is* (something)”.

The difficulty people find in these conceptions is due solely to sticking to the term “is”, and forgetting the character of thought, where the moments as much are as they are not, - are only the process which is Spirit. (*The Phenomenology of Mind*, Baillie p.777)

This process, as we cannot but see it as, intensifies itself in the Second Creation, called the Incarnation, which is thus one with the first from all eternity or, less pictorially, timelessly. We might say it does this in man: period. Behold (the) man, said Pilate. Only then, only from this height of dialectic, does God first become (again) concretely or concrete God, Spirit, Idea or absolute Knowledge.

This lies behind Hegel’s at first shocking suggestion, in the early *Faith and Knowledge*, that really Spirit proceeds from the Son alone (as synthesis from the antithesis alone, for once)³. From this standpoint we look back upon what we thought had really happened as upon a (dialectical) dream, from reality to the shadows, manhood to childhood.⁴

So does Mind “create” or not rather posit phenomena, or is what is created rather something else, itself even, in an internal movement transcending phenomenal change? Is the theological term “create” a picture of this? Are the possibilities themselves necessities and therefore, as seeming modalities of our subjective manner of knowing, not to be “spoken of” in philosophy at all (see *Enc.* 143, on Kant). This is Hegel’s deepest meaning, incidentally rescuing the Leibnizian and Scholastic-Aristotelian notion of cause as “reason of being”, in terms of which, in fact, Hume dismissed all notion of a cause or causes in time. Yet this has been still clung to uncritically in the procedures of physics, thus leading Reichenbach, for example, to end his book, *Space and Time*, with a section headed “The Reality of Space and Time”, though since he wrote, 1927, one discerns (or imagines) the beginnings of a nearer approach, already implicit though in Einstein’s relativity theories, to the philosophical conception of a cause, such as Hume can seem to have overlooked while himself employing it. Here one has to remind oneself that even the gigantic atom-smashing machines governments are pleased to fund are, for absolute idealism, as ideal as they are finite. So there is no contradiction in

³ This is noted and dilated upon by Catherine Malabou in her *The Future of Hegel*. Cp. *The Phenomenology of Mind* (Baillie p. 773): “the self of Spirit, and its simple thought, are the two moments whose absolute unity is Spirit itself.” If the unity is absolute one can indeed speak as does Hegel’s *Faith and Knowledge* here, making just that point.

⁴ Cp. our *New Hegelian Essays*, CSP Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2012, Chapter Twelve (pp. 169-185): “Incarnation: A Dialectical Concept?”

specifying the particles they search for and find as ideal⁵, no leaving behind of idealism by science itself such as Reichenbach and now even Žizek seem to have imagined.⁶

It is as if the Christian (naïve?) realists take for granted the abstract externality of things, of the world, at the same time as they confess that in God we “live and move and have our being”. They even themselves speak of an “ontological discontinuity”, by analogy perhaps with a “time warp”. This, though, is to cease to take the true being seriously, now a Sunday being⁷ only. The very word “incarnation” urges this. There is no dogmatic compulsion, however, for adopting such a philosophically inadequate view, fundamentally erroneous as it is and as the mystics as well have ever witnessed. Hence we find the need, fairly constant, for a therefore ever new theology, in our own thought or faith (it is the same) not least. Thus Scripture itself declares that “the flesh profits nothing” and that “the presumed individual historical figure”⁸, i.e. Christ, “became a living spirit” as always having been it, descending from heaven without ever leaving it, as the old Christmas Gregorian liturgy and/or psalmody had it. Sacramental theology is thus in duty bound to take in this perspective, to transcend in *Aufhebung* its own fundamental notion. The bread “stands for” Christ because Christ and nothing else is truly “the bread of life”. Hence, as transubstantiation truly teaches, there is no (other) bread there. The world, as “deciduous and phenomenal”, is “in *esse* and *posse* null” (*Enc.* 50), “the being which the world has is only a semblance, no real being, no absolute truth... truth abides in God, so that true being is another name for God”. This is the total reversal of “pantheism”, incidentally, since “the being of the world is nullified”. It is not even, therefore “the means of reaching God” that it can and does seem. It “vanishes” in this very “upward spring” of “ungrateful spirit”., for “the process of derivation is cancelled in the very act by which it proceeds”. As modern philosophy made plain, however, there is no prior substance, other than in appearance, to be “transubstantiated”, and to that extent the term is misleading in the

⁵ On Hegel’s “ideality of the finite” as “the chief maxim of philosophy”, see *Enc.* 95.

⁶ Cf. S. Žizek, “Is it Still Possible to be a Hegelian Today?” in Levi Bryant, Nick Srnicek & Graham Harman (ed.), *The Speculative Turn: Continental Materialism and Realism* (Melbourne: re-press, 2011), pp.202-223.

⁷ In Chesterton’s *The Man Who Was Thursday* (1900)/he is even called that.

⁸ Although Baillie cites “*gemeinten*” in parenthesis he mistranslates it as “presumably”, as if we must all do such presuming, as if no one dare think the phenomenality of history and hence of this present arising from it, as if Hegel did not demonstrate indeed the ideality of the finite.

same way as “incarnation”. What transubstantiates as nullifying the world is spirit or thought itself. We “think the world away”. Such dogmatic or credal formulations can be seen, though, as the necessity of “the absolute picture-idea” (*die Notwendigkeit des Inhalts der absoluten Vorstellung*), “the one need... of getting an idea of God” (*Enc.* 573, beginning), and as such, as in the making of any other judgments, there need be no falsity other than that of the very finitude of speech itself, making “all judgments false” as “one-sided”. The holistic task of theology therefore, of philosophy, is the considering of all sides in unity, in one, and that is what Hegel points to in saying that the world or, better, “everything... is a syllogism” as truth’s judgment upon, or which is, itself.

Yet otherness itself, Hegel accordingly says, “lies in the very notion of Spirit”, as does creation, therefore:

This “Creation” is the word which pictorial thought uses to convey the notion itself in its absolute movement; or to express the fact that the simple which has been expressed as absolute, or pure thought, just because it is abstract, is really the negative, and hence opposed to itself, the other of itself; or because, to state the same in yet another way, what is put forward as essential Being is simple immediacy, bare existence, but qua immediacy or existence, is without Self, and, lacking thus inwardness, is passive, or exists for another. This existence for another is at the same time a world. Spirit, in the character of existing for another, is the undisturbed separate subsistence of those moments formerly enclosed within pure thought, is, therefore, the dissolution of their simple universality, and their dispersion into their own particularity. (*The Phenomenology of Mind*, Baillie p. 769-770)

Yet Hegel does not stop here. The world “is not merely spirit thus thrown out”, though it is also this. For this very conception is itself one-sided, as absolute idealism as such proclaims. It is conscious “individual” self that “distinguishes itself as other, as world, from itself”, i.e. as doing this within itself, in identity with itself, to speak less figuratively. This refers as much to God himself, as Spirit, as it does to man or the “first” man who “falls”. This individual self, namely, “to be self and Spirit”,

has first to become objectively , an other to itself, in the same way that the Eternal Being manifests itself as the process of being self-identical in its otherness Since this spirit is determined as yet only as immediately existing, or dispersed into the diverse multiplicity of its conscious life, its becoming “other” means that knowledge concentrates itself upon itself. Immediate existence turns into thought, or merely sense-consciousness turns round into consciousness of thought... not pure knowledge, but

thought that contains otherness, and is, thus, the self-opposed thought of good and evil. (*Ibid.* 770)

The religious mind, as we know, has represented this pictorially. Hegel seems to mean, anyhow, that the duality of good and evil consists precisely in what has become thought's constitutive self-opposition or contra-diction. Such opposition, as self-concentration, is itself thought or what thought is. Acceptance of this identification makes the contrast of good and evil dialectical, as essential to each of the pair. There has to be, in a word, "war in heaven" as presupposed to what must be viewed as result, as end realised, i.e. actively as well as or because essentially. Such intrinsic generativeness on the part of Spirit as such, Hegel boldly asserts, results in the firstborn Son of Light or Lucifer being, as "self-concentrated", the one who "falls" or, this is the meaning, the first yet own other of thought, of the Idea. Another, he yet more boldly adds, is "at once created", adding a comparison with "Son" to show that no finitude is here implied by use of the finite term, thus ignoring the moment in the history of dogma that turned on the difference here between Arius (creation of the Son) and Athanasius (his divinity). This is an instance surely of Hegel's "self-consciousness".

Thus far though the account might seem to exclude the necessary character of the Word's generation (Trinity), unless we see that Hegel is giving the rationale of just this necessity, though still in partly "pictorial" form. He "transfers pictures into the realm of thought" (p.771). The plurality of forms and figures is "matter of indifference". We may see this as a negative angelology, coordinating it with "the simple thought of otherness in the Being of the Eternal". The "self-concentration" may be endlessly transferred and, *mutatis mutandis*, if needed, to us too. Any "counting the moments", however, would be "useless". Trinity itself, as Aquinas had noted, is indeterminate in relation to number as such. *Numeri non ponuntur in divinis*, I cite yet again. This, in fact, is the answer to those opposing Aquinas's prior treatise *De Deo Uno* to that following upon the Trinity, which they often don't even notice is there at all, in thirty *quaestiones* or so, each with a bunch of separate *articuli*. In the mind of both thinkers numbers don't count, "it is useless to count". God is one and God is three, "and yet there are not three gods but one" – this is no mere statement of paradox. Number is itself *aufgehoben* and always was so, as we can see even in Hegel's treatment of atomism as a moment in Logic, of "the bare difference of magnitude and multitude", which "falls outside conceptual thought" (p. 772).

Hegel has joined together what is more usually considered separately, in preparation for his presentation of the necessary "incarnation" of God,

where God “first comes to himself” or, in truth, is primarily revealed as revealing, as revelation itself, rather, there being no other or “object of” the revealing. Meanwhile, we should not apply the uselessness of counting only to directly Trinitarian thought, as nor does Aquinas, who refers to “divine things” simply. One notes the indiscriminate coupling of the Son with an angelic creature, as of one “moment” with another. Each becomes, in eternity, what he has always been, as does God himself at the incarnation, for Hegel. In this sense we can speak, with Heidegger even, of an or the primordial event.⁹ This is mirrored in the ceaseless generation of and by men and women on earth, from whom therefore the animals derive, in the divine order, rather than contrariwise (see previous chapter). It was thus far idiosyncratically correct to say that McTaggart presents Hegel’s thought as a Trinity having countless persons as constituents. What unites them is Mind, which Hegel, like Aristotle, does not quantify.

We ought to have expected this, even in the Greek case, when we recall the claim for mind of a necessary immateriality as “root of cognition” (Aquinas), because anything material would get in the way of cognitive identification as *paremphenomenon* (Aristotle, in *On the Soul*,¹⁰ meaning “that which appears beside”). Must not the same apply to the presence of a plurality not immediately reducible to perfect unity, as this is known by mind as necessarily infinite? It “appears beside”, namely. What is a multitude of spirits unless one and the same, which we merely represent as passing from one to another because we are unable to conceive spirit’s eternal identity, as infinite, with each of these moments, as we must, however, and as Aquinas does, reasoning that the divine essence must be identical, eternally, with each and any of its, the divine, ideas (*Summa theol.*, Ia 15). Identity all round excludes finite composition, inclusive of pantheism. So persons have to be separated as much and as little as Father, Son and Spirit are separated. Hence a man said: “He that has seen me has seen the Father”. Seen the Father! Or all there is to “show” of him, at least; and yet there is always a component of knowing to seeing, since this is irreducibly “seeing as” (even *as* a red parch, say). Such is the background to that achieved self-consciousness Hegel, or Christ, or “the baby Negro” or, in fact, all describe and desiderate for all.

The mediator then, as rational postulate, is the one “made sin for us”. Hegel is clear that this occurs in thought, or dialectically. This is not the

⁹ Cp. Goethe’s *Im Anfang war der Tat*. Was and is, we should rather say, thinking of the eternal as ever new and “actual” generation of the Word. The Father is this fathering act.

¹⁰ Again I recommend Eugene Gendlin’s recent “line by line” commentary on this book, though itself written from an Aristotelian rather than a Hegelian standpoint.

“modernism” condemned papally, c. 1907, because it is not a matter of reducing Christ’s and his work’s reality as against a supposed rock-bottom reality of the world and men generally.¹¹ Thought, rather, requires abandonment of our immediate representations of these in a self-consciousness backwardly cancelling them and abstract individuality along with that. This is the injunction to “hate” one’s “life in this world”, to denial of self, not merely moralistically but also or because ontologically, as the fantasy of “ontological disparity” strives to deny, fantasy unless this is put as the incommensurability of zero with one, with unity in identity. As Hegel puts it, the principle of personality is universality, for the reason, naturally, that universality itself is not abstract but the concrete principle of personality. “You are all one person in Jesus Christ”, religion apostolically declares. The temporal event represents the eternal truth, as history represents thought’s own dialectic, this being the ground-plan of Hegel’s first systematic work. Thus time is indeed “the moving image of eternity”, its own “image and likeness”, thus inseparable from incarnate spirit itself, to the point of being it.

It becomes clearer that Newman’s project of a development of Christian doctrine, underlying “form” of today’s theology, becomes unintelligible as anything other than impious and self-contradictory as long as the naïve realism of “the faithful” remains confused with faith itself. At a certain point in this development of doctrine there has to be development of this doctrine of development itself, toward the insight, namely, that this development denotes the speculative dialectic taking place essentially in the interiority of mind, of the Concept, not to be confused with the first appearances of spirit in “the soulless recollection of a presumably (*gemeinten*) individual historical figure and its past”¹², in accordance with our remark upon history above, that, as in the book just cited, it represents in the course of its development the development of philosophy itself, the latter being in reality the timeless method and system of logic as the truth which is spirit.

We might recall here that meditation upon the sacred humanity, as it became called in subsequent manuals of “the spiritual life” (ascetic theology), was a comparatively late medieval development now by and large superseded, a “moment” of Church history. It cannot and does not

¹¹ Maritain, however, makes the same judgment from an opposite viewpoint:: he writes that compared to the contemporary theological development “the modernism of Pius X’s time (Pope from 1903 to 1914) was only a modest hay fever”. This speaks, however taken, for the importance of what is happening now, represented here as from a Hegelian standpoint long prepared.

¹² Hegel: *The Phenomenology of Mind*, Baillie p.765.

cancel the apostolic injunction, “Even have we known Christ after the flesh we know him so no more” (he, of course, the enjoiner, never had done so: he is strengthening his credentials, intentionally or not¹³), an injunction also in those times oft repeated to cloistered folk as urging them to transcend such meditation in contemplation, rather, as more spiritual, namely, better corresponding to what we “are come to”.

To sum up, following *The Phenomenology of Mind*: “The abstract Spirit... is not indeed the abstract pure essential Being” (Baillie, p. 768). Creation adds nothing, that is to say (“more beings, but not more Being, *plura entia sed non plus entis*). Spirit, he says, defines even or is “a process of becoming something else”, in itself as spirit, even should stillness be recommended. It will, must, be fruitful. This is the truth behind the semi-pictorial characterisation, *causa sui*.

Or, what is the same thing, the relation of the eternal being to its self-existence (its objective existence for itself), is that of pure thought, an immediately simple relation. In this simple beholding of itself in the Other, otherness therefore is not as such set up independently... Spirit, which is expressed in the element of pure thought, is essentially just this: not to be merely in that element, but to be concrete, actual; for otherness itself, i.e. cancelling and superseding its own thought-constituted notion, lies in the very notion of Spirit. (p.769)

Hence, as “the other of its own simplicity”, pure thought “passes over into the proper element of imagination”, proper, that is, to “the pure notion”, the moments of which thus

acquire a substantial existence in opposition to each other and are subjects as well, which do not exist in indifference towards each other, merely for a third, but, being reflected into themselves, break away from one another and stand confronting each other. (*ibidem*)

Here Hegel closely links, unites, his metaphysics, his theology, with what we know as history with its conflicts. This is as essential to it, to being, as are persons themselves, of which therefore, as he says, universality is the principle. As essential as this, it follows, is the angelic creation of thought,

¹³ This of course is why Nietzsche can call him, Paul, the founder of the new religion, “the first Christian”. He is right in the sense that the Christ himself must transcend religion and its founding, sent as the sender of spirit, rather, in absolute religion become wisdom, from above, not materially or literally but in the sense of making previous religion relatively below, inferior, a necessary picture for thought knowingly to employ.

as Hegel describes, producing Lucifer as the latter produces, replicates, absolute knowledge as originally centred in the divine self-love as “a recognition of Love” in “pure thought”. This seems, on his account, to precede, to found, the Trinitarian processions as their explanation. Thus far it duplicates, with some difference, the Thomistic account of the procession of the Word as itself dependent upon or deriving from the divine simplicity.

His mention of imagination as thought’s pure element recalls Aristotle’s stress on the necessity of phantasmata, for which Hegel here gives the ideal reason or thought-constituted reason. The *logical* necessity of the sense-world and its cognitions¹⁴ is here implied. Spirit in fact “becomes an other to itself” in and as it “enters existence”. As a divine necessity there is no quasi-Neoplatonic priority over being in God, in Spirit, implied. Rather, Spirit is this act (of be-ing), which is act as such, just as it, Spirit, is, in its essence, any other of the ideas “flowing” from it yet remaining within it, *diffusivum sui* without diffusion. Even the “pure will” of Boehme is thus overcome. There never was such a thing. Spirit “creates a world”, that is what Spirit is. We may take this as Hegel’s interpretation, which he here rationally justifies, of the first words of the Bible: “In the beginning God created...” He will eventually equate this with his own (or anyone else’s, as held within his own) self-consciousness. This is Hegel’s answer to D. Suzuki’s question, in his *The Field of Zen*, as to why God “had to” create a world? It cuts both ways, however. We might say, no creation because out of my head or, equally, creation just therefore. Either position remains *acosmism*. Or, Spirit is this cosmos of spirits (McTaggart), which “it is useless to count”.

¹⁴ *Sensus est quaedam cognitio*, Aquinas remarks. Hegel gives the rationale for this in the absolute unity of infinite mind., though one might also or at first argue from the former to the latter, as Hegel demonstrates in his *Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God* which, beginning with the *a posteriori* proofs, pass, in what is yet a process of invalidation of the former, as passing from the false to the true, to the *a priori* or “ontological” proof. On the point of logical necessity one may note, for example, that several separate attempts have been noted in evolutionary biology at evolving an organ of apprehension of light as reflected, i.e. of sight. Of light itself, Hegel denotes it as “nature’s first ideality”. In what sense then, one might further ask, does the human mind “come from outside” (Aristotle), if one may drawing the same conclusion from the denial of this concerning what appears now as all the more “creation” as a whole, mind now standing as its own justification as absolute, “its own community”. Nature without mind is an abstract and hence illogical fantasy or picture.

Spirit... creates a World. This "Creation" is the word which pictorial thought uses to convey the notion itself in its absolute movement (process of becoming something else); or to express the fact that the simple which has been expressed as absolute, or pure thought, just because it is abstract, is really the negative, and hence opposed to itself, *the other* of itself; or because, to state the same in yet another way, what is put forward as essential Being is simple immediacy, bare existence, but *qua* immediacy or existence, is without Self, and lacking thus inwardness, is passive, or exists for another. This existence for another is at the same time a world. Spirit, in the character of existing for another, is the undisturbed, separate subsistence of those moments formerly enclosed within our thought, is, therefore, the dissolution of their simple universality, and their dispersion into their own particularity... The world, however, is not merely Spirit thus thrown out and dispersed into the plenitude of existence and the external order imposed upon it; for since Spirit is essentially the simple Self, this self is likewise present therein. The world is objectively existent Spirit, which is *individual* self, that has consciousness and distinguishes itself as other, as world, from itself. (pp. 769-770, parenthesis added)

It is not thus something else, such as matter. Or matter, Hegel will say in *The Science of Logic*, is the same as form. He might seem to be disregarding or denying the two senses of "is" stressed by Aquinas, either as the act of being, *actus essendi* (Scotus said he knew of no such act, *nescio* etc.) or as affirming "the truth of a proposition", so that the metaphysics gets reduced to saying, in effect, "There is a God, that's what God is".¹⁵ In fact, however, for Aquinas too these senses are related. This is why, he says, we use the copula "is", if we do, to express the inherence of all and any form in its subject, this being the act of form as form, such that God is finally pure form (or *forma formarum*, form of forms: cf. Aquinas: *In I Perihermenaias*, lesson 5, no.22, cited in our previous chapter). A foundation of the metaphysics of being upon this copula, as equally founding itself upon the former is here discernible, anticipatory of Hegel in its witness of thought's atemporal unity. Thus it is, further, that for Hegel to posit something as immediate or "the pure negative" (or nothing, even) is not to dismiss it. This final or fundamental act, of being as of active essence (*essendi*), which includes, is one with, the being in act of every and any idea as thought absolutely and not in finite abstraction, might just as well be negative. So God, as everything, being, is put by Hegel, at thought's own foundation or in logic, as effectively nothing, as

¹⁵ Peter Geach: *Three Philosophers*. He exaggerates the difference, the apartness, of these two senses, however, thus emptying both of their essentially dialectical content as intrinsically reflected into one another

the universal of universals which is I, the Idea. Neither God nor any consciousness, thus far, is in the business of being something. Precisely this is the nothingness, *in esse et posse* (*Enc.* 50), of the finite world, as of all things finite, as failing one and all to be identifiable with their idea, as Kant demonstrated for his hundred dollars.

At first, Hegel goes on, this individual spirit, as he now identifies the world and hence God or man indifferently as being, “is not yet conscious of being Spirit”: i.e. we have not attained to the fullness of its content; “individual self may be called ‘innocent’, but not strictly ‘good’.” There is no passage, no evolution, here from absolute Spirit to individual man. Spirit everywhere “is its own community”. Hence it is creation, equally, which he extends on, in thought, to Quaternity, Quinity and beyond. Such creation itself extends, in fact, to the “taking on” of human nature (p. 775). Since this extension is conceptual it effectively asserts that “the two are not separate”, the taker and the actual taking on, as was already implicit in Scotus (necessity of incarnation independently of a *felix culpa*) and, we have suggested, in the Bible.

Hegel’s originality, however, lies in telescoping this with a “procession” of the Devil, of “evil” as an original stance, which thus cannot be alien even to the Divine nature, at the same time as he designates evil as “a sham-existence” (*Enc.* 35, add.), unlike the historical dualists. His view thus remains “creationist”, as attributing creation, in a yet closer identification than hitherto pictured, to the absolute principle or Idea. Here we see, incidentally, how form, as absolute essence, in Hegel as in the Platonic theory “of forms”, is not reducible to “universal” genus, which Aquinas identifies as a mere *ens rationis* (like non-being, dreams, the future, but also goodness and truth as other than sheer being: see his *QD de potentia*, VII) but is, much more, essence itself as true being in act, the correlate matter being pure potentiality, hence, nothing, such that God or the Idea lacks nothing in “lacking” it, in lacking nothing precisely. Hegel expresses this by saying that the Absolute Idea is the Absolute.

*

“This incarnation of the Divine Being, its having essentially and directly the shape of self-consciousness, is the simple content of Absolute Religion” (Hegel: *The Phenomenology of Mind*, Baillie, p.758). Hegel’s theology of the incarnation can appear as the most difficult part of his system to grasp, simply because it is the fulcrum upon which everything turns, where all the characteristic notions come together, as in a contrapuntal unifying of the otherwise diverse themes of a symphonic

career or movement. In this sense Christ, for him too, is the “solution of all questions”, highest and lowest standing together and only together, the dialectic being grounded in such prior unity, mind’s own constitutive backdrop.

Hegel’s all-generating assertion here, itself a pure (and not “mere”) logical insight, is that “this moment of otherness”, in the divine or infinite, “does express diversity”: *diss Moment des Anderssein, wie es soll, die Verschiedenheit zugleich ausdrückt* (Baillie 772; cp. *Enc.* 117).

In the same way, it is a matter of indifference to co-ordinate a multiplicity of other shapes and forms with the simple thought of otherness in the Being of the Eternal, and transfer to them that condition of self-concentration. This co-ordination must, all the same, win approval...

The “moment of otherness”, again, must “express diversity” as this is the next moment (after Identity) in the logic of the matter, in the Concept. He is absorbing this religious material into pure thought, claiming that this is how it is in itself, that it is the thinking, *nous*, that is divine. Everything up to this point and beyond in his system shows that we have to appropriate that in virtue of which, by this knowledge, man becomes a rival to God and hence evil. Yet, by the same reasoning, mind has to think of evil as in God too, and he instances divine wrath. God must become, be thought as, a rival to himself. He might be thinking of the flood God sent upon the earth and after which, the Biblical text declares, he repented of this, i.e. it he judged it an evil act. We do not here need go into Hegel’s motivation for his position, which might or might not hide a wish to justify Scripture, but only to see the logic of it. It is an unusual account of evil, as knowledge, namely, that he offers. By it evil is made a moment of absolute goodness, or why do we not affirm the opposite? Rather, each quality is one-sided in isolation from the other. This means that Hegel will have nothing to do with the *entia rationis* of Aquinas and the tradition hitherto, whereby good, also truth, beauty, unity are both accepted and yet, there too, rejected, as both being and not-being, rather as an abstracted “practical” reason is and is not mind or, dare we say, think, God himself is both being and non-being. Or is it not, as he concludes, that also these two are, in their reconciled opposition, the Idea, the freedom of which we alone may “call” God. This is absolute, logic’s end or “full stop”, itself now “going forth freely as Nature”, itself God’s true Word in its entirety as that “creation”, as it is figured, which is God’s own “beginning” or what he is, while in this freedom God is equally I, or you, the same and not the same, good or evil. Of these,

their truth is just their movement, the process in which simple sameness is abstraction and thus absolute distinction, while this again, being distinction per se, is distinguished from itself and so is self-identity. Precisely this is what we have in sameness of the Divine Being and Nature in general and human nature in particular... But it is in Spirit that we find both aspects affirmed as they truly are, viz. as cancelled and preserved at once: and this way of affirming them cannot be expressed by the judgment, by the soulless word "is", the copula of the judgment. (p.777)

By this, though,

Man is the self with no essential reality of his own and the mere ground which couples them (sc. Good and Evil) together, and on which they exist and war with one another.

These are the passages which Jean-Paul Sartre had well and truly absorbed before writing his *Being and Nothingness*, being thus able to reach the same conclusions independently in dependence. Hegel shows himself here the more radical philosopher of language, as compared now with Wittgenstein. It becomes clear that it is not only "the mystical" concerning which we should keep silence, but the traditional and/or Fregean logic, to which Wittgenstein remained wedded as a norm, even when and in denying or contradicting these. We should rather have to say everything is mystical, as language is not, perhaps the essence also of Russell's objection to "Mr. Wittgenstein's logical mysticism". In truth, as in falsehood, nothing can be expressed by the judgment, by ink or the touch-keys' electrical impulses, which are like the *flatus vocis* of the late-medieval nominalists, spiritual men indeed. Such things "both are and are not" (Plato). "Spirit is its own community", while "God has spoken only one Word", writes John of the Cross, recommending silence to those who would get anywhere in "prayer". "In order to come to that which thou art not thou must go through that which thou art not", he writes. Hegel merely adds, as the Carmelite mystic might have agreed, that I also am what I am not.

The serpent had only spoken of becoming as God by knowing good and evil. However the philosophical tradition is that one formally becomes what one knows in steadfastly beholding it or, in a Biblical image, one gets changed into it by degrees, "changed from glory into glory". This makes philosophy, knowing, to be its own reward. "This is eternal life, to know God and Jesus (the) Christ whom he has sent", as appointed or *de facto* (they are logically the same where "the factual is normative") mediator. Eternity cannot have two apparently unrelated components. Hence the "and" functions here as a sign of identity. It is the same with the

Biblical love of God and neighbour, this point, as made in *I John*, being ontological rather than moral merely, exposing an evil hypocrisy as “sham-being” indeed.

In this pictorial co-ordination of multiplicity with “the simple thought of otherness” we get the angelic hosts. We get the Trinitarian persons constitutive of Spirit declared as open at least to “numerical expression” as a Quaternity or even a Quinity. The threefoldness merely reflects simple Being as its own otherness and hence its “self-existence” in that other. It is the unity had by the transcendence of number as principle. In fact this transition into otherness, as act of being *qua* being, has no end. Conversely, each individual contains and embodies and is constituted by, as necessary to it (as it is to him/her), the entire Trinity. He, the individual, is thus as such “ruined”. “The living being dies because it is a contradiction” (*Enc.* 221 add.): as is expressed by the body’s “infinite negativity”.¹⁶ This whole consideration, though, is the unspoken basis of the Kantian “kingdom of ends”, the necessary condition indeed for this kingdom’s eternal realisation (Hegel’s end as such realised) as it itself elicits such a condition, thus in reciprocity cancelling the contrastive pair of condition and conditioned, as, in Hegel’s exposition of logic, the effect makes the cause to be cause.

The dissolution, of which Hegel next speaks, however, is not between two separate elements pictured, as they often are, as “separate and independent beings”. In truth they “confront each other merely as thoughts” (774). It is dissolution of the opposition of the Divine Being and its otherness, which is Nature or, equally, the Word, not thereby reducible, though, as Hegel is often one-sidedly taken to mean, to Nature, as Nature itself, however, is not to be only *materialiter spectata* either. Nature, rather, “groans and travails”, like or as the Christ while still “on earth” (*Romans* 8). Similarly, Hegel calls the State “God on earth”. He does not much guard in either case, then, against an option (of reduction) he does not recognise to be an option worthy of thought, of consideration.

How far, in general, thought has to go in this necessary appropriation of religion’s representations, of “creation” for example, emerges primarily perhaps in this treatment of Good and Evil as “specific distinctions of thought” (773), which, when “their opposition is not yet broken down”, “are represented as essential realities of thought”, as if each is “independent by itself”. This was the defect of calling man, as noted above, “the mere ground” of their conflict, itself a failure to comprehend

¹⁶ “Body”, according to Aquinas, has, as an abstract term, no place in metaphysics but, he oddly adds, only in logic. Yet it found place in what was or is called the “Apostles’ Creed”, the Nicene later replacing “of the body” with *mortuorum*.

history's underlying tranquillity as that of the dead burying their dead, so to say. "The end is realised". Yet and "all the same", "the self is their actuality" as "universal powers". But Hegel is not re-affirming dualism here. Rather,

As evil is nothing else than the self-concentration of the natural existence of spirit, conversely, good enters into actual reality and appears as an (objectively) existing self-consciousness.

Note the term "appears". This, Hegel seems to mean, underlies thought of "the Divine Being's transition into otherness" as constitutive of what this being, Spirit namely, is. Figurative thinking, as he calls the "religious" conceptions, can seem better to communicate "its realisation". That is, he implies, we need such thinking and need, therefore, to "believe" in it as "necessary". Only thus can we see Christ "made sin for us", this corresponding to the reconciliation of what is opposed in itself but, truly, as this is accomplished in eternal and hence necessary thought as, indeed, what thought and its self-revelation ultimately is, this reconciliation of opposites in the transcendence of judgment itself as the final judgment. "Judge not". Nonetheless, he seems to affirm, this reconciliation, of and within the Divine as with its own other-being, as itself the divine infinity, is only "taken" as the Divine Being "humbling" itself (Baillie's scare quotes seem not to be in the original, where *Selbsterniedrigung* is printed and, one supposes, was also written normally, Hegel showing no disgust or contempt, therefore, for this expression of religious mediation). At the same time a certain distance from Augustine is implied, who in his *Confessions* wrote, as of a shortcoming, that he did not find this self-humbling "in the writings of the Platonists" though he found all else belonging to wisdom. This indicates a certain mental dualism Augustine was not equipped to resolve in quite the way Hegel resolves it, by referring to a figurative element which is yet necessary still "for us", even should we become philosophers. God, he says in effect, renounced his "abstract nature and unreality", itself plainly a figure for the unreality of *our* conception of God hitherto or when untaught by the Gospel-action – of the one figured figuring.

Imagination simultaneously, as part of the package, "takes" evil "as an event extraneous and alien to the Divine Being". Here though we simply choose to ignore for a moment the flat statement, to Pilate, say, that he had no power (over Christ) except it were *given* him "from above". The "evil" in God does not spare God himself or ruffle his unbounded happiness, while Shakespeare's lines -

We are as flies to the gods,
They kill us for their sport

- seem to be after all in a measure true, which explains why the sparrows, as is known to “your heavenly father”, do indeed fall to the ground when their time comes, but only then. To this also we must be reconciled. This, however, refers primarily to reconciliation in thought, i.e. in truth, whereby death, say, becomes seen as the opposite of what we first imagined. Hegel makes this a general principle of his account of essence. Thought, accordingly, passes through death as unconcerned as if it, death, were nothing but its own self or, in Spinoza’s words, there is nothing a free man thinks of less (than death), words McTaggart had engraved on his “memorial tablet” in the chapel of his Cambridge college, Trinity by name.¹⁷ This “thinks of” is more radical than the more usual “fears”. Thus figurative thought “is devoid of the notion”, its efforts to understand “a fruitless struggle”, It is faith itself, however, that pushes belief on to internal or spiritual comprehension, “understanding spiritual things spiritually”. Only an abstract conception of philosophy would be tempted to discount such a consideration as to its concrete reality, whereby God, and hence the Idea, is revelation, in Hegel’s words, as having or being no alien object.

The alienation of the Divine Nature is thus set up in its double-sided form: the self of Spirit, and its simple thought, are the two moments whose absolute unity is Spirit itself.

This is Trinity, concerning which Hegel notes a double “disparateness” of Spirit and of the Word that Spirit unites with itself. The meaning in general here, though, is in essence that expressed, independently surely, in a passage in George Macdonald’s sermons where he suggests that the crucifixion is a representation of God’s eternal movement of love within himself as found in what he calls one of his “outer provinces”, an ideal or finite one, Hegel would add, if Nature or “the world” is intended, though insofar as the world is, according to him, God or the Son it is itself, when viewed in its true essence, in the Concept, infinite or itself infinity, but in self-alienation, as a passage cited above (cf. Baillie 769-770) confirms. Still, however, Macdonald’s suggestion falls short, is itself a mere representation, of the philosophical (Hegelian) position, whereby “obedience unto death, even the death of the Cross” is not some particular

¹⁷ Cf. P.T. Geach: *Truth, Love and Immortality*, “An Introduction to McTaggart’s Philosophy”, Hutchinson of London, 1979, p.14.

thing God does far from home but is a representation or picture only of that uniquely constitutive self-returning act or doing, inconceivable to imaginative thinking, which is the Divine Being itself, as “God is love”. How, we are inclined to ask, can a person be love? Yet so it must be, the reasoning shows. The same, we saw, was the case with “creation”. It occurs necessarily as a moment of the divinely peristaltic or circumincessory act, as we must again call it, rather than “thought” or “life”, which this “pure” act rather absorbs and fulfils. These are not linguistic questions, since the choosing of words is at the service of thought.

*

Such, in general, is the difference between religion fulfilled in philosophy and religion on this side still of that. The two states or conditions do or can understand and accept one another, must do so in the case of philosophy (cf. *Enc.* 573, second paragraph: “a philosophy of which the doctrine is speculative, and so religious”). But what does Hegel mean, then, by “actual reality”, in the above quotation and elsewhere, where he says both that “good” enters it and that it appears “as an (objectively) existing self-consciousness”? Whatever enters it, as a this or that, as particular, is an alienation of the Idea into a realm alien from Spirit (and yet absorbed in it as Spirit’s own other). As thus alienated it is appearance, “ideal”, being as not being, or what Hegel also calls a “moment”, to be finally absorbed, namely. Or, it is itself utterance, to be finally or eternally absorbed in all-inclusive act or, it is the same, tranquillity. The Idea is its own full or incomposite (simple) utterance, its end in its beginning in being as such realised.¹⁸ Or, it is revelation, utterance, itself, a going out as coming in. “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof”. That is, each moment (day) is the whole - or, when the whole is each or any moment time is no longer distinguished from eternity and contrariwise. That is why Hegel says “time is real for spirit for as long as spirit needs it”. Why didn’t he say rather “to the extent that”? Because the speculative humour itself makes a point, a further point, and this can be made in no other way. In and from time we move out of time, the whole time, since that is consciousness.

“The mediation of figurative thought is necessary” (p. 780), Hegel declares, as is the incarnation itself. Like Aristotle’s phantasmata it is

¹⁸ It was thus an error for Anscombe or Geach to have concluded to a confusion of two senses of “end”, of *finis*, in the sources. It is rather an error of the Understanding to have so separated them. The beginning in which God created (*Genesis* 1, 1) is at once the end of all “things”, the one event, the perfect tense.

constant throughout any thought-process and is not left behind. We strive, it may be, to “become universal self-consciousness” while all the while “the universal, just because of this, is self-consciousness”. We seek as having found. This is the truth guaranteeing the saying: “seek and ye shall find”, otherwise a platitudinous untruth. The Divine Being “dies to the abstraction of the Divine Being”, which thus itself dies, in being “affirmed as a self”, as self. This is loss of the Substance in the pure subjectivity of Substance itself as finally apprehended. It is Subject, and thereby is not, as if some substance over again. “The soulless word ‘is’” gets no purchase. This is universal self-consciousness, “formerly called spiritual resurrection”, i.e. what resurrection must mean (spirit as meaning). Spirit knows itself as the true absolute content and such knowing constitutes spirit, i.e. it is pure self-consciousness. The advice of the Oracle to Socrates was not to know himself as if knowing another merely.

“This is eternal life, to know God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent”. That is, they are the same, necessarily, if eternal life. “He that has seen me has seen the Father”. Seen! The particular, Hegel here affirms, is a necessary mediation: i.e. it mediates its own sublation, as it were ungratefully. “Even have we known Christ after the flesh yet we know him so no more”. One sees where Hegel is coming from. Mediation is thus a logical necessity. Religion generates the notion of spirit (p. 782). Hegel binds this to “forgiveness”, thus rescuing the latter from mere moralism. As subjects we are changed, again, into what we behold, which is thus no longer object in abstraction from subject

“This depth of pure self is the power by which the abstract essential Being is drawn down from its abstractness”, its own action, in and by the Jews as, “a nation of philosophers” (Porphyry), by Jesus and then by the philosophers, by philosophy, by Hegel. This unity of Essential Being and Self is “brought about”, but eternally, in a logic, a *logos*, that dialectic merely represents. Here too the Spirit proceeds from the Son, from the “communion”, yet what appears as new is the oldest, the eternal Result, spiritual reality as self-realised, as self-realisation rather. As the incarnate God condescended to speak the language of Judaism so Mind speaks here the language of Christianity. A Christian is a Jew is a man is God. Thus religion sublates itself to absorption, in neutralisation of subject-predicate difference, in interior perception.

*

Jesus was the Messiah of the Jews, many of this unique people confess, whether or not acknowledging his godhead. This means that in him, as

Abraham's "seed" (*quam olim Abrahæ promisisti*), all the nations of the earth are and/or are to be "blest".¹⁹ The Mohammedans, not able to look back, must still await their Messiah, reconciling all things. One might say they had him already in one such as Al Hallaj, who claimed to be God and whom they crucified. One from among them, indeed, might well, at some time, be identified, if in some difference, as the Word himself come again, in accordance with the fluidity asserted of Spiritual notions. This would be the victory, the conquest, not so much prefigured as *pictured* by the Crusades (in an ideal of conquest never in fact realised, however), in an Age of the Spirit unlike all other ages as absorbing them in a finally fulfilling age of the ages, *in saecula saeculorum*, an age or *aevum* no longer distinguishable from eternity and having nothing to do with some one last privileged generation, as pictured even in some Apostolic writing or, at least apparently, in Marxism. There and then the true meaning and beauty of all the devotion of Islam will shine forth, the errors and abominations of individuals and groups, as on the Christian side, which is not a side, no longer remembered, while if the one coming or who came should come again it need not be just once. New every moment is the hour, ever made new, as is time's intrinsic promise. So too the final delivery of all things "to the Father, so that God shall be all in all", is made in every moment of our contemplation, in the midst of action as at prayer in the Temple, no longer made of bricks and stone, or when reading or expounding philosophy, indifferently. The venerable religions of what we

¹⁹ Cp. *Genesis*, AV, for "blest". The Latin phrase may most immediately recall Mozart's exultant musicalisation of it in his last, incomplete work, a setting of the old Roman liturgy of *Requiem*, where Abraham is put as ancestral father of the Jews, his "seed forever", and of "all who believe", according to the Apostle Paul (Nietzsche's "first Christian"), in one. This figured generation by physical offspring of the elect or "chosen people" is itself, by Hegel's logic, as individual, representation of man's *universal* destiny, since man himself, however, in Hegel's words, is a figure or representation of Spirit, of the universal, one with or "the same as" God, just in virtue of Hegel's logic, again, where "the individual is the universal". One cannot forbid, therefore, the reversal of this identity, when freed from all extraneous taint of reduction. This problem, of a putative reductive conversion, only arises if one posits the identity in its immediacy as an executed conversion, an absolute *event*, in finite and hence self-contradictive particularity, as of a narrative free from representation, which then duly elicits the disclaimer ("Athanasian Creed"), "not by conversion of the godhead into flesh but by the taking of the manhood into God" Philosophy makes short work of this, since it is simply so, beyond all "events", the reasoning would show. For divine birth and event as operating "exclusively on the plane of eternity" see Cyril O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel*, New York 1994, p. 259 *et passim*.

call the East, too, there need be no doubt, will fit themselves more and more into this scheme without hindrance to their free movement and comfort, as it will be at once a fitting of ourselves into them, hand and glove being one, as a proverb has it, so you can no longer tell, there being nothing to tell, which is which. Not only are the other sheep these ones' "own other" but sheep and shepherd are one, one fold and one shepherd making one and not two, where "all shall know the Lord" (*Book of Jeremiah*), in ceaseless becoming of what they know and are, therefore, absolutely.

CHAPTER TWENTY

MASTER AND SLAVE

Of these two Hegel says: “They stand as two opposed forms or modes of consciousness”. Both moments, of self as such, “are essential” in unlikeness of opposition (as war is to peace): “their reflexion into unity has not yet come to light”.

The Master-Slave reflection of this in society, in the state, is a representation of this, while it is in their representation that consciousness can be most usefully thought, just as all thought has for its necessary condition the yet epiphenomenal or, better, paraphenomenal. Compare Aristotle’s *paremphinomenon* or “that which would appear beside” in a hypothetically material knowledge-organ, disqualifying knowing or any “having the other as other”. In Hegel, however, matter or any abstract physics in general, with duality of matter and form, is excluded. “Both are at bottom the same” (EL 129). Hence the master-slave social relation, as any representation, both is and is not itself (cp. Plato, *Republic* VI).

*

Recognition is here a prime category. Just by being recognised, namely, does self-consciousness “exist in itself and for-itself”, viz. that it exists “for another self-consciousness”. Compare the Bantu proverb: “A person is a person through persons” (umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu. Hegel is not original so far. This though is the basic premise for a strictly philosophical Trinitarianism. This fact, that the Trinity is found to be the rational account of God, governs Hegel’s concept of revelation.

But this “fact”, this first category of recognition, can surprise. Other texts seem rather to urge self-consciousness as a sufficiency. Hence the Trinity has or is necessity at and as its logical root. This is no more than any Christian would finally expect to be the case, though he or she often add that one cannot personally see that this is so, and this is often generalised to apply to all “human” thinking. But here “human” becomes in the Hegelian sense an abstract term. Man is that which he is not and is not what he is. God himself, anyhow, must, as and if God, find recognition

in himself and this is the Idea, absolute or self-validating (equally self-willed necessarily) knowledge, ever in act, beyond past or future, without potentiality as actual end or as all realised possibility, this category itself falling away rather. No possibilities confront God. Nor does act act further, or motion move or rest rest (or even, Hegel will add, being be, or love love, since this, the Concept, is the true being (cf. *The Science of Logic*, final section). Yet thinking, Heidegger once said, is “letting being be”. The point though is that, by Hegel’s exercise of such “letting”, it is then disclosed as restless or ever-living thought. So Hegel speaks of thought’s, the Idea’s, “unity in duplication”, having many sides, of the need, for instance, of an enemy or opponent, of the negative.

The infinity of self-consciousness, which is its nature, entails just this unity in difference, to the nth, its “being the opposite of the determinateness in which it is fixed”, as the part is the whole, the sing the signified, the one chosen the whole community, Leviathan. This is the incarnation of God as something not added on. This is the concept of Spirit-

Self-consciousness self-alienates, accordingly, *per se*. It finds itself as an other, which is thus not other. In this finding, though, it “sublates this other”, seeing itself there only. It “must cancel this other”. That sublates, again, the doubleness just posited, which though only makes a second doubleness. For once certain of itself it sublates this too, having made this other itself. This is love really, and yet it is the struggle to the death. Sartre saw it, therefore, as the dialectic of marriage. Such love is a return into itself, giving otherness “back again to the other self-consciousness”. “Greater things than I have done will you do, because I will be in you”. This is Hegel’s whole programme, since it is a part of it.

Yet two are acting here, but as one. The object (the second self) is not only passive or “object of desire”, since it is for itself existing. In fact that object must “do *per se* what what the first does to it” (as is actual in Trinitarian thought). There is a pattern of necessary imitation. Yet both imitated and imitator (each is both) are needed for any actuality at all. The act is “done to itself as well as to the other”, “regardless of their distinction”.

Hegel here refers back to “the play of forces” (*Phen. of Mind* III, 1). Force is “the unconditioned universal” or, equally, self-conditioned, leading to a “kingdom of laws” explaining the world. They are seen as “inner”, their differences as phenomena, where alone laws too “appear”, though themselves noumena. This sets the problem of and for “self-consciousness”, that the noumena are themselves nothing except as they

appear (as God becomes incarnate). "There is nothing hidden that shall not be revealed".

But the process, which though had self-projected on to the world in dual, is now found in the one consciousness, "holds for the terms themselves". It is thus the move in towards Logic.

The middle term is self-consciousness, which breaks itself up into the extremes; and each extreme is this interchange of its own determinateness and complete transition into the opposite.

Each consciousness now

is the mediating term of the other, through which each mediates and unites itself with itself.... They recognise themselves as mutually recognising one another.

This is certainly love. Does Hegel mean it is also both lordship and bondage, i.e. that these "change places" or, rather, are interchangeable in essence? Sartre seemed to think so. Why after all do men love women and vice versa, though only one of them is Lord or first? Naturally this is challenged, but one-sidedly when not seeing the sameness of difference.

Recognition, its necessity, elicits the duplication. This is after all not unrelated to the intentionality of consciousness as such, of "intentional being", *esse intentionale*, as are the concept, all logical entities and, Hegel would show, God himself, the Idea Absolute as absolute.

So now, how does the conception appear for self-consciousness? Here we come into the Master-Slave fable, illustrating this double dialectic, as dependent, we need to remember, upon the intrinsic conceptual elicitation of recognition from self-consciousness, derived from or leading into Trinitarian thought or, more generally, sublating the dialectic of the One and the Many in Being as of Identity and Difference in Essence (the doctrines thereof) to reach the concrete universality proper to self-consciousness, as "its own result", as that of self in other, of love as thinking, as liberation (from what, unless slavery?). "For thinking means that, in the other, one meets with one's self" (Enc. 159), in the power of necessity.

Self-consciousness "breaks up" into the opposed extremes. This is a logical or necessary moment, dictating history therefore. This is the "aspect" presented as it "appears for self-consciousness". Of the two opposed "one is merely recognised while the other only recognises". The mutuality already achieved, in the analysis as in "reality", supposes these are the same, since self-consciousness, all the same, "is primarily simple

existence for self'... by exclusion of every other"."To what will you compare me?" asks difference against dialectic, or, in the supreme case - "*Quis ut Deus?*" By this, Hegel's "primarily" puts unlikeness above likeness in absolute being.

Since it "takes its essential nature and absolute object to be Ego", this self-consciousness "is individual". "Individual and actual are the same thing" (*Enc.* 163) but this is individuality *in* universality, i.e. personality, of which universality is the principle (163, first addition).

What is other for self-consciousness is for it "unessential" object, negation. Yet "the other is also a self-consciousness": any individual "*appears*" in antithesis to an individual". Each is first an object for the other, they "not having risen above the bare level of Life", only "the Idea immediate", we recall. Hegel pairs this with Existence.

Self and its other must "accomplish the process of absolute abstraction", "uprooting all immediate existence". He is speaking of self and its other. The self-certainty of either, though, is "without truth" prior to certainty of the other. "A person is a person through persons" (Bantu proverb). By recognition nothing else is possible. Solipsism must be mutual, universal, hence self-cancelling. The solipsist cannot understand why everyone else is not a solipsist, so that he or she could not meet and love them on that ground. This is profoundly erotic, as Sartre noted. Just thereby, though, is it "agapetic", of good will, necessarily self-risking, even sacrificial (of life), to which "nothing must bind me" (Beethoven, *Notebooks*).

The conquest of master by slave, then, is a self-conquest (of the natural Ego). All must die" and *so* enter into Spirit, by *athanatizein* (Aristotle's pre-condition for contemplation or even just study, alone "desirable for itself" (Augustine). This is the philosophical life as ultimate norm of Absolute Spirit, as religion (*höchste Gottesdienst*), to which art summons us, at every and any level of cultural life, it is important to notice. Illiteracy and culture make little or no difference here; that is why philosophy is not itself and could not be something written down, just as art is not known in its narrated history, as religion is not theology.

By recognition, "as the other is for it (self), so it is for the other". This is what Hegel twice calls "this pure abstraction of existence for self", But we had thought he was against abstraction. He is, but as living we must recognise ourselves (separately) for what we are, as being precisely what we are not, since our self-consciousness (its truth) "is fettered to no determinate existence... not bound at all... not tied up with life". Life dies, as this freedom does not.

By this "each aims at the destruction and death of the other", as we are urged to "hate father and mother" ("let the dead bury their dead") and our own "life in this world", i.e. life. This is surely Hegel's pedigree, and here he seeks to show the rationale of it. Does he succeed?

In seeking the death of the other the self "risks its own life". It "is solely by risking life that freedom is obtained", presumably daily, if we are spiritual. Here is proved that self-consciousness "is not merely the immediate form in which it at first makes its appearance". We must ever go further. It is here "guaranteed that there is nothing present but a vanishing moment". Thus "self-consciousness is merely pure existence, being-for-self". One not thus staking (i.e. losing) his life is indeed "a recognised Person", yet not one attaining "the truth of this recognition as an independent self-consciousness".

We take this needful risk in aiming at the death of the other. One must "cancel that externality". It is as if Hegel goes back upon his earlier vision as sketched, of mutual recognition. "The other is a purely existent consciousness and entangled in manifold ways, it must view its otherness as pure existence for itself, or as absolute negation.". So it is not clear which is which, the struggle is with self but as other, as in Jacob's night-wrestle. Slave and master are one, self other, other self, in this "trial by death" (Baillie, p. 233). In view of this one may affirm that Hegel anticipates the rejection of the Cartesian privileged individual consciousness by Nietzsche and Heidegger. Yet he even adds something less pronounced in their thought, viz. the identity of developed self-consciousness with all consciousness anywhere, in what may be regarded as universalisation of the incarnational principle corresponding to the development of this by the "spiritual community" after, and due to, "the death of the mediator". Yet this reduced emphasis in the later thinkers may itself be due to, or indicate simply, a more full assimilation of religion into philosophy, a relative bridging of the Hegelian chasm between the exoteric and the esoteric, to which religion, in the shape of its theology, is required to advance or in fact does advance in this the highest *Gottesdienst* (Hegel), philosophy.

Now Hegel introduces Master and Bondsman in a relation to *thinghood*, the "certainty of self" having, apparently, been "cancelled altogether", after one has risked it (why?). It was a trial *by death*, note, and not only "to the death". So there is no more recognition. Both "cancel their consciousness which had its place in this alien element of natural existence; in other words they cancel themselves". The two "let one another go quite indifferently, like things" (Baillie 234).

What can this mean? Here "self-consciousness becomes aware that *life* is as essential to it as pure self-consciousness". Is this backward? We shall see. Self-consciousness too is not perfected as "immediate", the simple ego as absolute object (the foetus in M. Klein's analysis). It is, rather, "for us, or in itself absolute mediation" (cp. Kant's Kingdom of Ends)

Yet it has "substantial and solid independence" just thereby, as caring for all. Through the struggle, occasioning dissolution, is "posited a pure self-consciousness, and a consciousness that is not purely for itself, but for another". This means it is existent (in a world), it is "consciousness in the form and shape of thinghood" (embodied perhaps? That rather goes without saying in this Hegelian context).

So here were two "essential moments... unlike and opposed", while "their reflection into unity has not come to light", two opposed modes, one, for itself purely, one dependent, the essence of which is "life or existence for another". The first is Master, the latter Slave. The Master is the consciousness, that exists *for itself*, mediated with itself through another consciousness: that is, neither of them is some *man* or institution. The other's "very nature implies" a bond with independent being or "thinghood in general" (not true of any actual human slave). Yet

The master brings himself into relation to both these moments (we thought he was himself one of them), to a thing as such, the object of desire, and to the consciousness whose essential character is thinghood (Baillie 235, parenthesis added).

Whose? Hegel is having his cake and eating it. Why not though, if such must be the relation between phenomenal and noumenal (play of forces: logic and spirit: free concept of freedom)? *Ecce homo!* The man who is man, as we each are. So we say "This is a dog", not just "some dog", analytically as it were, but this is dog (and hence individualised, but first indistinctly).

There is some repetition in Hegel here. But who is the master? The master relates himself to the bondsman mediately through independent existence. Could we possibly have dropped into merely finite social thought here? No, the thought is peculiar, too peculiar for that. "The master, is (a) *qua* notion of self-consciousness, an immediate relation" (like the classical Trinitarian persons in that) of self-existence" (Baillie, p. 235, parenthesis added). He is "at the same time mediation, or a being-for-self which is for itself only through an other" (like, if one so wishes, the independence of a slave-owner). He stands in relation both to himself and to another, i.e. he is both identity and difference, though "mediately to each through the other", i.e. they are neither different nor identical, these

two, being both moments of one thing. No doubt this has its social reflection, but not more than that.

So who is the bondsman? Independent existence keeps him chained. The master is the power dominating existence". But in the same way the slave, as, broadly, a self-consciousness (the same one?), also cancels things, the thing, but since it is independent he cannot annihilate the thing, only "work on" it.

Hegel here speaks of the master's consequent enjoyment in pure negation (of existence), fulfilling desire. He can "have done with the thing", thinghood, as in a movement inwards (like all enjoyment?). This, Hegel shows, makes him increasingly stupid or out of the picture. Or, he only enjoys "the dependence of the thing" and not the thing, in some sense the Kantian thing, which Hegel himself wants to drop.

So the master "gets his recognition through another consciousness", self-declared inessential. But who is it? Where does he come from? Africa? Surely not. Bondage, a consciousness repressed within itself, will "change round into real and true independence". This is bondage only in relation to lordship. What is it in and for itself? It takes the master for its essential reality (Hegel is internalising the relation). So for it the truth is "not inherent in bondage itself", yet. Yet it contains experiences, this "truth of pure negativity of self-existence", as self-experience. It feared death, the master. All fixed has quaked or melted within it. This, though, the fluidity, is the ultimate nature of self-consciousness, absolute negativity. Marx's saving self-consciousness of the proletariat is common to us all. Hegel also calls "pure self-referent existence" (Baillie, p.237) self-conscious, though this can seem an odd translation of *das reine Fürsichsein*. One would not usually take *Seyn* for existence in Hegel. "This moment of pure self-existence" results from that melting flow mentioned, in or as absolute negativity, as it were "ready for anything", open, where nothing is what it is as what has been opened was shut to begin with, again logically. This moment, of *Fürsichseyen*, is itself a "for it". Self-consciousness knows itself as knowing itself. As the dogmatist says, "I know that I know". But here is no dogmatist, pure faith rather. What then was the struggle to the death? In breaking free from the master the slave casts down the shackles of the Understanding. Is that it? To be self-conscious is to be spiritual, to have "a mind of one's own", but after fear and service, Hegel insists. Fear is overcome in "formative activity". Why? How? Carpentry perhaps? What is "the thing" shaped here mentioned?

Why does he say that in the master self-consciousness finds pure self-existence "as its object"? This surely echoes his doctrine of the ideality of

the finite except as in the Idea in differentiated identity. It is it, the object, for him, this in-being. Nor is it only or from the beginning, so to say, general dissolution and flow. In serving (Dienen) he makes it, his the slave's self-consciousness, fully real. In every particular moment he cancels his dependence on natural existence, working the same way in all the moments (under some neutrally universal motive or motion). He is the thinking philosopher or, better, philosophy. This is the slave's destiny.

There is "a feeling of absolute power", realised "in the particular form of service" (p.238). Hegel in fact refers here to "the fear of the lord", in scripture "the Lord", as "the beginning of wisdom", thus giving the game away. Hegel is describing the progress from fear to freedom in "religious" consciousness as moment of the Absolute Idea, of sophia, in theology, as informed faith, one, perhaps the supreme, of the traditional, because Scriptural, (seven) gifts of the Spirit, under which the Dominican school, a century or two before and earlier, had treated mysticism in general, to which Hegel has compared speculative philosophy in the *Encyclopaedia*, first part, and elsewhere. In stressing such continuities one leaves open the further question as to how to assess the philosophical development. This appears immanent in the earlier moments of the tradition while at the same time transcending it. That is to say, tradition, the tradition, as living, is inherently self-transcendent while this quality is itself the essence, the meaning, of time itself, as later brought out in further development in the thought, chiefly, of both Nietzsche and Heidegger. As far, though, as concerns Hegel himself the summarising text that springs to mind as denoting what he here analyses in the Johannine "I no longer call you servants but friends".

At the same time reference to "absolute power" can recall Hegel's "undifferentiated force", an expression he will use elsewhere in denoting the process of thinking as such. For in general his theological sticking-points resolve themselves into the Aristotelian "thought thinking itself" as the substance of absolute metaphysics and the key to as destiny of all religion and, he claims, art, which yet, an oft neglected aspect of "the system, supplies indispensable foundation to the actuality of the whole, represented merely in temporal development.

Here the "masterful" Understanding is transcended, killed. What is meant is that fear creates, "objectifies" consciousness, as "the beginning of wisdom" (and the first, again, of the spiritual gifts). Fear, he says, is given body by "service and obedience" (p.239). To what? An idea? An employer? An owner? Without this ground of absolute fear (religion?) consciousness and individuality are unreal, an attitude. This is clearly related to "the staking of one's life" earlier mentioned and definitely fear-

arousing. *Der eigene Sinne*, anyhow, is then just *Eigensinn*. One is still in bondage.

The pure form must become our essential nature, undifferentiated force, free mind, the Absolute Idea, necessity. This free mind Hegel will find perfected in Renaissance and Reformation, with which, Louis Bouyer asserted a half century ago, in his book *Erasmus, "the Church"*, Hegel's "spiritual community" even, we might add, had still to "come to terms".

Hegel, anyhow, bridges the imagined gap between history and thought, between appearance and ultimate reality, having interpreted the latter as the Absolute Idea. At one moment we inhabit thought, at the next history or social reality, while both moments, in the logically atemporal sense, are one in difference with the Idea. There is mutual interflow of which, as even of interflow as such (it is therefore not merely or abstractly a particular interflow, thought is the form.

This bending back (reflecting) upon self, on the part of thought, resembles or, better, is resembled by Beethoven's breaking into (that's what it is) his own symphony (*O Freunde etc.*). It is disconcerting in the same sort of way, a shift, as is practiced in this his chapter section, "Independence and Dependence of Self-Consciousness: Lordship and Bondage" (*Phen. of Mind B, IV A*), resolving by establishing the contradiction as "The formative process of self-enfranchisement" (Baillie's translation). The shift transports us back to the absolute realm we seek with some difficulty, but it does this, as a whole class of interpreters chose and choose to ignore. Or has Hegel indeed become merely operative, a somewhat romantic social theorist? Rather, the finite is clearly absorbed, as set out in his logical writings, as infinity demand it must be. So when is a man not a man? When he, as man, is spirit, as life is absorbed, it too, in the Idea. We may, with Heidegger, but indeed with Hegel too, first investigate being as appearing as *Dasein*, but the harder task is still to come, as when Hegel, on the final page or two of the *Greater Logic* identifies, with Aquinas, with Aristotle, identifies being as the self-knowing Idea, as God, *theos*, spirit (which he has theologically identified with "the Holy Spirit" of faith, in view, one might say, of its necessary apartness (the holy) as all-absorbing and , equivalently, all-moving, absolute motion or "restlessness" as he puts it.¹

Findlay finds the dialectic whimsical, having only a make-believe necessity, since the transitions could be different and are so (in the

¹ How far Heidegger completed, or dismissed, this further task for and in his own time (it requires a perpetual performance or fulfilment), of identifying or explicating being as such, I would, for no, leave open, recalling, in this respect at least, his own insight that "Thinking is letting being be".

different versions). If this were so then the whole thing would be pretentious, non-systematic. McTaggart, acknowledging these differences, sees the absolute necessity Hegel claims as in the end arrived at in and as the philosophical Idea. The truth is that this free variability belongs to the Idea itself. All the roads lead to Rome. Thus Hegel maps history on to the logic and not *vice versa*, as merely appears to be so in this the "first part" of his system, as he tells us himself. So those are not entirely wrong who see social and political analysis in this section, since it is logic that determines not only the fact but also the detail of finitude. This is also the basic principle of Scripture mystically interpreted (with which orthodoxy "stands or falls", Newman was to declare), despite the surface appearance of arbitrary voluntarism.

The details, that is, were not first "there" to be (then) chosen, but are rather the necessity of an absolute moment of the Idea's self-realisation. Thus, referring to the *Euthyphro* problematic in Plato, while commenting on *Epistle to the Romans*, Thomas Aquinas affirms that it is in a deeper sense than that God commands what is right that what is right is so because God commands or so determines in seeing it.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

SPIRIT, REASON, GOD

Reason is God. This statement is not often well received; that God is reason even less so. On the other side, it might seem plausible from some of Hegel's remarks, or systematic theses rather, that everything is everything else, or at least its opposite. Indeed that good is evil, evil good, does seem a trace more plausible than that good, say, is the commendable merely, though this line was recently popularised in some quarters, a mere sixty years ago I mean (R. M. Hare), or even that it is an indefinable or non-natural quality, not even definable by or convertible with some supposed opposite, - no, certainly not that. That though was a hundred and ten years ago (G.E. Moore). But that would be to confine us to "what the English call philosophy" in Hegel's amused but by no means sneering phrase, in light-hearted reference to a contemporary Parliamentary speech.

In fact the Hegelian equivalences of what are abstractly opposed are put down to the fluid or lively nature of Spirit, mind, unresting as he puts it. I would submit that it is this notion alone that can underpin our recognition of a need for ecumenism today, for something that really does "overthrow the nature of an opinion", in the words of Pope Gregory XVI in criticism, condemnation rather, of liberalism in his "encyclical" letter, *Mirari vos*, of 1831. The good Pope had doubtless forgotten, or taken distance from, maybe, the scathing account given by Plato of mere opinion (*doxa*).

Under the sway of ecumenism, however, this is recognised and contrary opinions learn to rub shoulders amicably. This has a solid philosophical base, to which in fact we have just appealed, namely that all judgments are finite, do not capture the whole truth, are thus even and always "false" (Hegel is aware, quite consistently, that he is there himself making a judgment). We do indeed, our armies do, battle together "upon a darkling plain" as, under time's scythe, our own opinions, even they, swing round into their opposites.

Hegel offers reason why this is so. It is due to the restlessness, the very nature, of Spirit or Mind (*Geist*) as itself, finally, the Idea Absolute, open to all possibility, necessarily, in spirit's freedom, the freedom that spirit is (cp. Berdyaev: "God is not being; God is freedom", in his *The Destiny of*

Man) in its character as final necessity, whereby no necessity can constrain it. Mere possibility is in fact, by Hegel's logic, swallowed up. The "rule" for it "merely is that a thing must not be self-contradictory" (*Enc.* 143). This category "has now been explained to be on its own merits untrue", though it be "the chief pleasure" of "the empty understanding" in its "subtlety". Any content may be thus conceived "under the form of an abstract identity" (Hegel is here paraphrasing Hume: "whatever is conceivable is possible"), "since nothing is required except to separate it from the relations in which it stands". Yet possibility concurs with Being and Existence as "forms of the immediate" (and hence is as such false). Yet even actuality is, as "unity... of essence with existence", first of all immediate, while only Necessity (*Ibid.* 147) is "the union of possibility and actuality", the very union we have been considering and postulating here, and hence unconditioned actuality, as a mode now not of thought but of Being, the being that is "realised end", which is why, as we asserted above, there are, concretely, no mere possibilities. The possible worlds are not actual as possible. They are, while by contrast what is not. As in one sense non-being(s) they never were nor are possible, yet they are necessary in their specific actuality (we talk, are talking, about them), as, in Thomistic thought, they would be *entia rationis*, beings "of reason" (they really would), but not *res*.¹ This necessity which is the Idea, however, in no way constrains, resulting as it does from freedom without restriction. We have an analogy of this in moral necessity, called obligation, whereby indeed happiness is *die höchste Entfaltung der Sittlichkeit* (Martin Grabmann: *Thomas von Aquin*, Munich 1959), i.e. there is no independent realm of value, a category "unknown to the great metaphysicians of the past" (Gabriel Marcel: *L'homme contre l'humain*), i.e. value is not "the Good", i.e. not "independently" or abstractly it, and conversely. Thus it is "the ends of action which oblige primarily and *per se*"², actions themselves only obliging with respect to these ends, ultimately this end, in the highest sense natural (to us as to God, for whom the end is himself), in view. The necessity, that is, is that of our own end, our own flourishing or happiness, by deprivation of which constraint, *coactio*, is defined. The only final necessity of nature, whereby it is sublated in the Idea, is (its)

¹ A lot of sacramental theology focuses upon this, inviting detailed comparison, with a view to deeper understanding of both traditions, with Hegel's affirmations of a position he tends to regard or at least present as specifically Lutheran in *Enc.* III, "The Philosophy of Spirit", 552.

² Aquinas: *Summa theol.*, IIa-IIae 58, 3 ad 2, also 44, 1; *Commentarium in Sent.* IV, 33, 1, 1.

freedom, that whereby the Idea itself first went forth “freely as Nature” (*Enc.* 244). In short,

It is otherwise with the necessity arising from an obligation of precept, or from the necessity of the end, when namely someone cannot obtain the end of virtue unless he does this. (Aquinas: *Summa theol.* IIa-IIae 58, 3 ad 2).

Nature and natural ends are presupposed, namely, to making sense of the work of reason, i.e. they are non-coercive necessities and even, as regards mind or spirit, Idea and the Absolute in one, necessity itself as the highest freedom, in which each of us is eternally conceived, while what is not thus conceived is not possible even in idea. We may, if we wish, relate this to the “innumerable” spontaneous and other abortions that occur, a consideration sometimes adduced as implying an argument against the reality of individual “souls”, though there is no logical connection at all. Hegel’s demolition, or observation of the “ruin” of abstract individuality, nonetheless, helps remove the sense of the paradoxical here, analogous to the infinite applicability of the human hand (ultimately an incarnational trace of mind in its entirety), as distinct from the “ideal” limitations of a claw, say.³

Thus ecumenism depends upon spirit as being itself spirit’s fruit. And this, Hegel might say, is God, himself “realised end”, though he finds it preferable in philosophy to avoid using that name, he says, while habitually breaking this recommendation himself. This has a certain consistency with what his own speculative philosophy affirms, as I have been illustrating. West is east, here is not here, and so on. It begins here, or there, with the unsustainabilities of sensory cognition.

These truths, which are one and all falsities (the only road to truth, however, Hegel insists) find a certain reflection in today’s speculations about possible worlds, as they did long ago when Aquinas stated as a premise of an argument he was discussing that in an infinite time whatever can happen at some time does happen. This does not however mean that what has not yet happened is for sure going to happen. It will be realised at the end of time (by whom though?), i.e. initially or logically, that whatever didn’t or has not then (when?) happened *ipso facto* could not have happened. Possibility is just not a separate modality, Hegel concludes,

³ On these themes, see our *Natural Law Reconsidered*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt 2002 (the reference is to our *Morals as Founded on Natural Law*, Frankfurt 1987, 1988), an immediately pre-Hegelian work of mine entirely open, however, to completion by this “new Aristotle”.

when viewed under the atemporal categories of logic. The timeless study of time dissolves it.

In this way our judgmental strife witnesses to the supremacy of spirit. If I were not, with all my cherished opinions, God would not be, Eckhart had exclaimed, in some amazement, and some apply this even to a butterfly's wing and its momentary quiver. If Hegel does not do this, does not attribute to omniscience total inside knowledge of a cloud of gnats at each of its vanishing moments, then this is due precisely to such vanishingness on the part of the object. What is vanishing has vanished as, indeed, what is living, for spirit, has lived. Thus he accounts for the saying of Christ (as the fourth most theological evangelist attributes it), otherwise opaque, if we would consider: "If I go not away the spirit will not come unto you". This becomes in fact, in the logic, a truth about life itself, that it is "only the idea immediate". This brings us to the divinity of mind, to mind's infinity and the nothingness of man. "Dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return".

*

That mind is immortal, or infinite – it is the same – might seem to be simply asserted or assumed by Hegel. Instead, this is the Idea to which logic as a whole concludes, since, as he says, this Idea is the Absolute itself. What is infinite, however, is *ipso facto* what we call God just as, conversely, only God is infinite. Insofar as there would be several infinities they would just join in one, in a unity beyond mere union or "inter-subjectivity". The latter term entails no more than one might derive, assuming the premises usually related to it, from a foundational declaration dating from the beginning of our era, namely: "Now you are the body of Christ". This infinity is the presupposition for truth in the mind on any coherent theory of truth, such as the "coherence theory" of truth, just for example, is not. The I, which I or any supposedly finite being might imagine himself to be (even so as to say this or speak at all⁴), not so much "becomes God" as it is necessarily eliminated in, or "taken

⁴ On McTaggart's interpretation of Hegel (though it seems also his own belief) the eternal minds (making up mind) neither speak nor make judgments. They simply perceive one another as perceiving self or others again with varying degrees of love (one of Hegel's forms of thinking distinguished at *Enc.* 159). Each one of them is essential to the whole, as the whole, including its least "moment", is essential to each of those (necessarily personal) moments. Here Hegel and Eckhart are rejoined. That is, the pretended divorce of Hegel from religion is annulled, by a self-proclaimed atheist!

up” into (differentiated identity), what Hegel calls self-consciousness or even “absolute subjectivity”, which is the same as the Absolute Subject. For, as Aquinas had put it, the name “God”, or any name for God, must be or become both a *nomen naturae* and a *nomen proprium*. Proper names are applied first to persons, secondarily to animals or cities, countries, rivers and the like. Even a person, however, is like a river or a whole city, or God. We can choose whether to call God a person, then, or merely like a person. One may say he is “beyond personality”, though wary of a possible ambiguity or indeterminacy in “beyond” as between superabundance or lack. It must connote more than, “greater than” in Anselm’s terms. Yet a person with a low view of personality might consistently dub God impersonal, seeing his analogue rather in a computer, say. This might imply a correspondingly low view of love or even of good will simply, unless he attribute good will to at least the virginal computer. As one might, since if evil is defined as an absence of good then good might be no more than an absence of evil (might it?), of fault or deficiency. Metaphysically, however, one may at least suggest, while evil is constitutively *semper in subjecto (bono)*, always in a (good) subject, this cannot be the case with God, who is rather to be identified with being and truth and primarily with primal being, as we are now identifying mind, *Geist*, with this. Primal being, Hegel will conclude, is the Idea, insofar as this follows from his saying (at the close of GL) that the Idea, and nothing else, is true being. For in this Idea all live and have their being and never outside of it, since there is no such.

Contingent being remains, as that which both is and is not, in Platonic or Hegelian terms. That is what it is, as, to compare at least, nothing is nothing and that is what it, nothing, is:

As I was going up the stair
 I met a man who wasn’t there.
 He wasn’t there again today.
 Oh how I wish he’d go away.

Is that, in all its childishness, how one would feel in Hell? Well, we don’t have to believe there is anyone in Hell, for more than its proper season, though it is certainly there⁵, as it was in Faust’s study, on one literary

⁵ I borrow this distinction, perhaps a flimsy one, from the Scottish bishop in Bruce Marshall’s fiction, *All Glorious Within*. For an alternative account, see the chapter on Hell in Peter Geach’s *Providence and Evil*, including the appendix on it added in later editions., based on a realist account of time allowing for “time-forks”, a sub-class of that “ontological discontinuity” now favoured by high-placed clerics

occasion: “Hell is here, Nor am I out of it”. Faust had asked Mephistopheles to “show” him Hell, while most if not all have made excursions there.

What one cannot meaningfully do, Hegel and McTaggart think, for the reasons they give, is ask for reason’s credentials, since credentials are judged at the bar of this same reason, which is therefore the sole fount of all credibility. At an earlier cultural stage miracle was called upon as a superior source of this. But a miracle is, would be, one appearance among many or, one should rather say, within the whole, which is the Idea, necessary rather than miracle, since it, as being, is miracle sublated. For in view of this, as Christopher Butler once argued, referring to a spontaneous (as he understood it) “big bang”, it would be atheism, not theism, that is the miracle.⁶ Here one equates miracle rather, in difference, with rationality, as one has equated the latter with absolute religion. An especial point of tension here might seem to be the Christian doctrine, or dogmatic figure, of resurrection, as in St. Paul’s “It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body”. There is much debate among theologians about “the empty tomb” and whether or not this is essential to the fact, to the datum of faith. I have sub-headed one of the chapters of this present work with another Pauline citation: “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin”. This expresses a deep truth, when connected with Hegel’s doctrine, which in fact it historically evokes and grounds, of self-consciousness. Self-conscious mind is one with logical method as Hegel expounds it, as the advance from being, with which “science must begin”, to the Idea as true being, from finitude of being as “ideal” to infinity as absolute spirit.

This ideality of the finite is the chief maxim of philosophy; and for that reason every genuine philosophy is idealism. But everything depends upon not taking for the infinite what, in the very terms of its characterisation, is at the same time made a particular and finite. (*Enc.* 95)

Neglect of such consistency, in assertion and “taking back”, Hegel found to be the “fundamental defect” of Kant’s “dualistic system” (you do not find it in Hume). The “shuffling” involved “only evidences how unsatisfactory each one of the two terms is” (*Enc.* 60, this whole long

unwilling to concede Hegelian unreality and falsehood to the finite “creation”. See my “Divine Creation, Exemplarism and Divine Ideas”, *The Downside Review*, October 2004, pp. 273-289, also “Creation *stricto sensu*”, *New Blackfriars*, March 2008. pp. 194-214.

⁶ Christopher Butler, *In the Light of the Council*, Darton, Longman & Todd, London 1969, pp. 30-31.

paragraph ends in praise of Kant's revival of Reason's consciousness and "the absolute inwardness of thought", which, however, as we find in the second paragraph of the addition there, he himself established "only formally", concluding that "the finite only is knowable.... The 'I' is thus looked at as standing in essential relation with the not I, through which its act of self-determination is first awakened", just as in "natural, plain Empiricism").

Faith, by contrast, is the thinking that this, "the ideality of the finite", is so, is the thinking of the Idea, its contemplation. The Idea is inclusive of "realised end", that all is and ever was accomplished, that to be spirit is to *have lived* (the "Idea immediate"), as Christ is worshipped as having lived, and is not to be "touched" before that, to speak in temporal terms, as we have to do. The Good is accomplished and it is plain illusion "which makes it seem yet unaccomplished" (*Enc.* 212 add.). Yet "Only out of this error does the truth arise" and that is the truth of it, reconciling us to it "and with finitude", the immediate and unfinishable, so to say, since as finished it is no longer finite but *the end*, of which after all there are not two senses in equivocation. The end of the story is its purpose. Here "Reason is as cunning as it is powerful" and absolutely so, Hegel adds (209 add.). As we say: "Man proposes, God disposes". *Der Mensch denkt aber Gott lenkt*. But what is God if not the rational, which is thus itself not less than personal nor less than anything. In rationality or thinking one "meets with one's self" as having itself precisely in the other, a liberation that we may call I, love, blessedness as indeed all "feeling" and "enjoyment" (*Enc.* 159). If this is a credo then Hegel has set out, like Anselm, to prove it, to ground his own antecedent life, a venture depending logically or first and last upon faith, such at least as we are characterising faith here, as something natural. Such faith's moving of mountains is indistinguishable from the realisation of the nothingness of mountains taken out of their essential relation to the Idea (which in itself yet has no relation to them). This is "the victory over the world, even your faith". Attention deserves to be drawn to these wide-ranging coincidences of religion and philosophy, so strongly stressed by just Hegel, who called philosophy's chief concern "religion and nothing but religion".

By this faith, by philosophy, everything is the opposite of, or other than, it at first seems. In viewing the finite we "see" or know the infinite. Things must therefore be looked at with and in perception, perceptiveness as we say. If nature is looked at piece by piece, *materialiter spectata*, we "miss the many-splendoured thing". Art, the most fantastic art especially, is a variety of the rational, a form, the first and thus in a sense foundational, of absolute spirit. To be of faith, then, is to be in harmony

with rational perception. Faith, therefore, just is reason in its capacity for “overcoming the world”, acosmism as such faith might be called, using Hegel’s own term (and that of an element in Spinoza’s thought with which he expresses qualified agreement), and thus called not one-sidedly at all, since the infinite does not “share the honours” with the finite, but rather absorbs it, “overlaps” and “in-cludes” or closes it in within itself (*Enc.* 95), as its own moment, just as a note sounded within the symphony is full of a meaning it would lack if just struck on its own. We are such notes, as such known to the symphonist, or symphony as itself a knowing knowledge, and thus personal. By this intellectual and “theological” virtue, faith, we are, have become, “quite beside ourselves”, as Jesus in action was rightly seen by his relatives to be “beside himself”. “If I by the finger of God cast out devils then is the Kingdom of God come among you”. So the evangelist recalls or interprets or both. Yet no memory, again, is without interpretation. Hence, again, the falsity of judging and, it must therefore be owned, of all “earthly” phenomenal justice. A hint of this is found in the ethical doctrine of *epieicheia*, the higher justice of knowing when to break the law, which is the point where ethics gets a window on to art as form of absolute spirit. The artist is precisely one who knows when to break the existing law, while in such breaking his art consists. One may recall the *fractio panis*, breaking of bread, sacrament or “memorial” of death, yet giving life in such perishing,⁷ as the poetry of a well-known hymn so well expresses:

When I survey the wondrous Cross
On which the King of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride,

This is the dialectic of *Loss and Gain* (title of one of J.H. Newman’s novels), apostolically put as “bringing to nought the things which are”, in philosophy acosmism, that things *are* in their non-being or “both are and are not” (Plato). Thus McTaggart’s *Studies in the Hegelian Cosmology* are one and all studies in such “acosmism”, the final cosmology indeed.

Here, Hegel says, we have “the revelation of the depth of spiritual life, and this is the Absolute Notion”. This, in fact, is history known in the depths of the self or become Absolute Knowledge “in the recollection of

⁷ Cf. Stephen Theron, “St. Thomas Aquinas and *Epieicheia*” in *Lex et Libertas*, ed. Elders & Hedwig, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City 1987; also Damon Casey and associates at Macauley University, Australian, article “The *fractio panis* etc.” (in my imperfect recollection), c.2000 (on the Internet).

spiritual forms". History here becomes the Science of phenomenology, of "the ways in which knowledge appears". Such intellectual comprehension is "at once the recollection and the Golgotha of Absolute Spirit", as in death's constitutive "moment" we are said to recollect our whole lives "in one", so to say. Here, therefore, in this moment, each is at one, in knowledge thereof, with all the others, with otherness as such and so not "lifeless, solitary and alone". He, and they, as in one "Chalice", "foams forth to God His own Infinity". Here Hegel adopts and adapts a verse from Schiller as conclusion to his own *Phenomenology of Mind*, witnessing thereby to "the truth of poetry", of art as of religion, a philosophical ending indeed.

Not merely despite but because of the richness of this developed vision Peter Geach was quite right, in his set of lectures on *The Virtues* (Cambridge University Press, 1977), to treat faith as a virtue and thus, by his thesis, needed for human flourishing as such, for life, like hope and love, before these get applied specifically to Christian life, i.e. where it is not yet seen, as Hegel sees, that such life, the Christian, is the very form and perfection of what life "is about", as we say. So a well-known Jesuit motto is "Do what you are doing", *age quod agis*, often mistaken for a mere psychological tag. It is more like the first commandment of the law of life, or of love, corresponding to our citation: "whatsoever is not of faith is sin". Sin, in the Greek, is *hamartia*, the primary sense of which is "missing the target" and we should take truth where and wherever we find it, prejudices apart. This, not acting from one's self-consciousness or aiming straight, in what one nonetheless appears to be doing⁸, is often expressed today in the injunction to "believe in yourself", not, that is, to be thus "of little faith". Such is the Hegelian self-consciousness, which is as far from an abstractly psychological stance as one can get, as is true of all philosophy as such. It extends to identifying self and other, this being the philosophical and evangelical answer to the question asked as to who is my neighbour. Of course such firmness of mind has its psychological manifestation or representation, such as the "hanging on" to established certainties when all feeling, say, taken on its own, revolts against them, instead of "painting the Devil on the wall".

Geach thus lists, and treats of, the four cardinal virtues, prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance, in a continuous descent (of chapters in his book) from faith, hope and love as the matter of the first three of the

⁸ One often hears today that men, in contrast to women, can "only" think one thing at a time. In fact this argues greater strong-mindedness, more focussed thinking. Nor is it peculiar to some or all men only, being a universal potentiality open to ever more actualisation, by men and women equally.

seven, but without giving the rationale for this interpretation such as we find it in Hegel. For Hegel the teaching of the Christian community, the definiteness of which he stresses as against Jacobi, is “revelation”. In revealing God reveals us to ourselves. Hegel does not treat directly of virtue and the virtues, however, perhaps unduly influenced by Kant’s curt dismissal of them, which, however, depends upon an ignoring of the thesis of the unity of the virtues, which, regrettably in my view⁹, Geach also attacks as “monstrous”. What Geach leaves out, however, is any treatment of the intellectual virtues, contrasted by Aristotle and Aquinas with these four “moral” virtues as being “more noble”¹⁰ than these are, while contrasting *a fortiori*, in Aquinas’s case at least, with the three “theological” virtues, which in fact stand legal morality on its head,

⁹ See, again, our *Natural Law Considered*, chapter 2.

¹⁰ All the same Aquinas states that whereas the moral virtues are virtues *per se* the intellectual virtues are (only) virtues “in a certain respect” (*secundum quid*)., i.e., he says, they perfect the intellect while the moral virtues, directed to “acting well” (the moral good), perfect “the whole man”. Yet he adds that virtue *per se* can be in the intellect wherever it is moved or ordered to will, as in prudence (practical intellect) or the theological virtue of faith (speculative intellect: cf. *Summa theol.* Ia-IIae 56, 3). In Hegel, however, will and the good are identified as penultimate stage (of cognition, in fact) in progress to the Absolute Idea absorbing, containing and even “cancelling” them. For him, that is, the final love of which St. Paul speaks, abiding when all else is absorbed as momentary, is itself a form of thinking, as stated at *Enc.* 159. Aquinas’s dualistic “whole man” has become St. Paul’s “living spirit” of the “last Adam” resurrected, not in the future but eternal. As eternal it is quite right to condemn, with him, the speaking of it, the (“general”) resurrection, as “already” (a temporal term) having occurred. So what will we say of Hegel’s speaking of the end as “realised”, “already” by implication? Only that this is a gloss upon his Good as “eternally accomplishing itself in this world”, deliberate speculative contradiction as this may seem. Resurrection occurs in faith as love, eternally, or in what St. Paul calls “light unapproachable” (from our temporal perspective, but compare Tolstoy’s titular use of the term “Resurrection”), where I “know as I am known”, Hegel’s “absolute knowledge” surely, though St. Paul in fact writes “shall”, but as part of a generally religious representation or intermediate form of absolute spirit. Virtues such as religion and justice are also engulfed in love and that in the Idea. Here Hegel differs, in expression at least, from McTaggart, who sees love as a synthesis between knowledge and will rather than a progression to love as thinking, precisely (159). Paradoxically the atheist seems here more scriptural. “God is love”, yet we have also “This is eternal life, to know God...”. But speech will always retain, has always to retain, the momentary or intermediate categories, as even the copulative “is”, the abstractly negative “not” or the noun “speech” as naming this phenomenon, and so on.

so to say.¹¹ One might try to see Hegel's account of *Sittlichkeit*, coming to a head in pardon and love, as informally approximating to this unity, as it does to Kant's final "kingdom of ends".

The intellectual virtues are severally identified as knowledge, understanding and wisdom, along with virtues of the practical intellect specifically, such as prudence (listed by Aquinas both here and as a moral cardinal virtues, a fact urging a certain fluidity in these tabulations), art and, it seems reasonable to conclude, *synderesis* or the habit of the first principles (of natural law). This term goes back at least to Jerome (fourth century), though the habit concerned might be seen rather as contained in prudence as (practical) intellectual virtue now, since it is more a *ratio* of morality than itself morally in action. Surely Aristotle, as also Aquinas, in calling these virtues make them necessary for human flourishing, required by "the whole man", while here we may find the limit needing to be set to Hegel's assertion of the esoteric nature of philosophy, though not of religion or art.¹² This stress upon philosophy as "esoteric", which, however, is functional to his long argument from the "exoteric" figure of Krishna at the end of the *Encyclopaedia*, is something a professor at one of our modern elite universities, even around 1830, may feel or have felt a certain pressure to affirm.¹³ The listing, by Aquinas, of art, otherwise in Hegel the first form of absolute spirit, as a virtue of the practical intellect, also indicates another place where Hegel's thought in regard to the virtues may be gleaned. It seems a pity that Geach did not explore more this avenue (of these "intellectual virtues") towards a transcendence of mere moralism as this is already offered by our sources. Even to these virtues, however, (moral) precepts are implicit, such as an obligation to know the truth and avoid erroneous affirmations or an obligation, as far as we can, to "understand spiritual things spiritually" and so on. In the tradition, in fact, any dualism of theory and praxis is evanescent. We find Aristotle

¹¹ This canonical list of three such virtues seems to derive from acceptance of St. Paul's first *Letter to the Corinthians*, chapter thirteen, where in fact they are not called "virtues" but "gifts".

¹² Is not this development, or our doubt of it, rather, connected with the gradual rise of democracy as with the associated revolutionary principles, liberty, equality, brotherhood, derived from Enlightenment philosophy but ultimately, as Maritain insists, distinguishing them from the classic "civic friendship" to which we cannot without scandal return (Cf. his *Christianity and Democracy*, Geoffrey Bles, London 1944), "fruits of the Gospel"?

¹³ Cp. my article, "The position of philosophy in a university curriculum", *The South African Journal of Philosophy* 1991, 10(4), pp. 111-114. Cp. also our "Reflections on the Teaching of Philosophy in Clerical Seminaries", *New Blackfriars*, January 2012.

saying that theory is itself the highest praxis while Aquinas defines practical reason as, simply, reason in practice or “directed to a work”. The parallel lists of moral and theoretical principles found where he discusses Natural Law, at ST Ia-IIae 94, 2, are thus in a measure misleading when not grasped as (mutually) analogical, a habit of the logical principles being itself a virtue (*habitus*), a “good habit”. Yet nor is reason “directed to a work” (*opus*) as to a mere side-office (*officium*, duty), so to say. Rather, we should think, with Aristotle, that some syllogisms are practical, in the radical sense that practical syllogisms conclude to and in *actions* and not to propositions (as with their premises) over again.¹⁴ The suppression of this simple truth, with which Hegel’s account of the syllogism (e.g. “Everything is a syllogism”) is in continuity, has been the main shortcoming of rationalist ethics.

Geach in his study asks of each of the virtues whether it could be attributed to God. God, as incomposite, would then have to be identified with it and so, by our principles, the same must be said of mind, as when we speak of upright mind or a person’s being “in his right mind”. The Socratic principle that virtue is knowledge here finds powerful confirmation. Then too, of course, knowledge is virtue¹⁵. The presence of such virtue, it will be seen, invalidates the rationalist account of knowledge as in itself an abstraction from the emotions or from happiness, from, as absolute, the “realised end” of all things. When Hegel proposes “absolute knowledge” he identifies knowledge with the absolute. He does not merely envisage an absolutisation of just knowledge as he might of some other quality. The case is similar when Aquinas characterises *immaterialitas*, just as such, as *radix cognitionis*, root of all cognition. Here the negative term is identified as the most positive of all, as of something which is pure form or form of forms, *forma formarum*, actuality in one word, the Idea in another. Where do we go from here? The Irish farmer, when asked, out in some bog somewhere, the way to Tipperary, replied: “Well, I wouldn’t start from here”. We are not starting, however, having arrived simply at this point in our study of notions as being the proper manner for genuine apprehension,

¹⁴ This is in fact why *akrasia*, often rather tendentiously translated as “weakness of will”, as if Aristotle recognised such a faculty, is such a problem for him. But why not just say such reason in action shows what we really want more than does our speculative reflection upon our actions past or future? Aquinas’s notion of *homo perplexus*, as bound to an erroneous conscience specifically, makes its first appearance here.

¹⁵ As such it is contrasted, though as being of the same conceptual class or category, with love in the Pauline account referred to above.

in or as union, of and with spirit, reason or¹⁶ God, a manner with which we, as *in via*, are no doubt less than properly or fully identified, however.

When a student I commented favourably on Aquinas's statement, in a Scriptural commentary, that *anima mea non est ego*, referring to the incompleteness of the soul as a substance (Aquinas speaks of the soul as an "incomplete substance") without the body. Well, wrote my teacher in the margin, God has to manage without one. Irrespective of this teacher's further views, this, I believe, is the basis for Hegel's monism, expressed as Absolute Idealism's being *the* philosophical stance. True, we find him writing of divine incarnation as the Absolute's necessary self-completion or using various similar expressions. This, however, more strengthens than modifies such idealism. The sensuous world exists *in* the Idea, in God, like all else and that necessarily. Any ideas, any moments of the absolute act (Hegel's "actuality"), in self-constituting processional round (Trinitarian generation and forth-flowing "spiration", both ever "in act"), are one, are, just as its moments, identical with the (absolute) Idea. Each of them is, in and as its moment, at the centre of this circle without circumference, since, necessarily, it is infinite. In this way the sensuous world partakes of and is, in its moment, the divine or absolute logic. Thus it is, for Spirit, the necessary negative, the other, of Spirit. So God unites with it (incarnation) because, as thought thinking itself (Aristotle), he *is* united with it, in that most absolute and necessity-constituting freedom of divine decision in eternal self-commitment "without shadow of turning" but in no sense either arbitrary or constrained. This consideration in fact refers to absolutely everything, finished or perfected before it even begins, since in fact it never does. Any beginning belongs to appearance. Hence science must begin with immediate being, in a movement essentially erroneous and thus afterwards, or in progress of the same argument, necessarily cancelled.¹⁷ This is the background for Hegel's saying that time is real for spirit for as long as spirit needs it. The self-contradiction, one sees, is deliberate, a speculative judgment upon the falsity of all judgments.¹⁸

¹⁶ It is time to replace the "and", though the Latin *vel* might have served better.

¹⁷ We see this in the traditional arguments for God criticised by Feuerbach just on this point, as arguing from everything's having a cause to the conclusion that not everything has a cause. Only the principle that the conclusion corrects the premises is lacking. The point is systematically explored in Hegel's writing.

¹⁸ In his paper "'Historical Consciousness' and Theological Foundations" (The Etienne Gilson Series 14, PIMS Toronto 1992) John Finnis sweepingly condemns speculative thinking, asserting it as a "norm" that "self-referentially inconsistent theses are to be abandoned". For an in a measure thorough dissection and

*

If reason is God then God is reason, we said when we began here. It is important to see that no reduction is implied, that this is rather the highest instance, or nearly so, of “understanding spiritual things spiritually”, in the Pauline phrase. A Latin American friend remarks that he has lived for a thousand years, coming from an area where the farmers all prayed for rain to a highly secularised Sweden. I wanted to surprise him by saying that I found it rational to pray for rain, only adding that I had a correspondingly rational notion of prayer, if I may trust myself here. Certainly it is incumbent upon absolute idealism to show this. The last thing Hegel wanted to do was to rob the untutored of their religious traditions. That is almost the whole point of his philosophy of (absolute) spirit as can be seen from his threefold outline of it. So how is prayer, defined as “the raising of the mind and heart to God”, rational?

Philosophy, Hegel says, its practice, is the highest service of God, *Gottesdienst*. That’s the answer. It helps to recall that Hegel includes will or love under cognition and both of these in the Idea. Petitionary prayer too is certainly a willing of something, since one begs for, wants it. To this we must add, in accordance with Hegel’s account of self-consciousness, that there is no willing that is not also a step, maybe the first, to obtaining it. This is the point about miracles being taught as necessary to the life of one declared a saint, understanding by a miracle a making something happen by a possessed power, in the petitioner, beyond the reach of the natural, at least as this appears to immediate consciousness, of, say, the five thousand fed by the loaves and fishes. So it is taught that the man of faith commands the movement of mountains, himself, not merely asking a superior or abstractly other to do it. The one asked, rather, is more intimate to him than he is to himself, to use Augustine’s justly celebrated phrase. Such is the overcoming of the world, by faith specifically, by developed self-consciousness. This is also the force of the proverb, “God helps those who help themselves”, so intimately that there are not two entirely distinct helpings or beings. Hence it is taught that while we may have a real relation to God (depending upon the view taken of our reality) God has no real relation to us or to anything thought of as outside himself.

So what is the force of the peasants’ piety? This, that in a rational world all is well and “all shall be well”, since “whether we live or die we are the Lord’s”, reason’s, God’s, one in spirit as a still somewhat vague phrase

refutation of his arguments here see the final section, “Scientific Postscript”, of my *The Orthodox Hegel*, CSP, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2014, pp. 395-411.

has it. Hegel's logic, as mine here, is an ironing out of this vagueness if it is anything. The farmer in question knows too that everything depends upon God inasmuch as everything depends upon himself, his hard work and so on, but in such a way that without God he "can do nothing", is nothing, ultimately.. He is not to be thus abstractly conceived, even though he most likely does not believe he himself can make it rain, as might Elijah or Moses. But then the question becomes, what is this "he himself" (the intensive particle "himself" already suggests abstraction). It is even in this sense also that "faint heart never won fair lady", or anything fair at all. Faith is needed, as accomplishing all, and this all, as the only true goal, is never in excess of an individual's, of anyone's reasonable desire, as might be a thunderstorm just tomorrow, say.

"Be still and know that I am God". Who then is this "I" of the Davidic Psalter, who appears there quite often? Whoever he is, this identification demanded by Absolute Mind (as even the truth, if any, of the theory of evolution or Pythagoras' theorem demands it) entails a being still of the thinking or spiritual agent, of those agents making up the body, the corps, of conscious beings self-conscious as appearing as on the way (in via), to the same. Of us too it will be said, is said, that we are because we "have been".

What this requires of the philosopher too, as endowed with philosophic mind, is that he be "never less alone than when alone", that he be still, calm, walking slowly along (a characteristic of the great-souled or "magnanimous" person according to Aristotle) in the consciousness that the end is realised, that all is well and hence "shall be well" (Julian of Norwich), in a union of mind with absolute mind, nothing else in fact being the endeavour of science. If "intersubjectivity" is operative here it is operative so essentially that mind has all within itself even before partnering in dialogue, as one certainly may and will. This dialoguing, however, must never become the centre of spiritual life, displacing that fundamental silence, the eternal rest of self-transcending motion that Hegel calls spirit. From this we must imagine Plato descending to dispute with or teach those other souls around him, united in spiritual bond, the identity of the other, of otherness, in its otherness with the same, which Hegel stresses as ultimate, as underlying any "substrate" proper since this, accordingly, must become irreducibly analogous or of the spirit, in the ultimate freedom, not "of" necessity but as freedom which is, finally, necessity, needing no constraint as being the other of itself in unity. Here, we might say, the Trinity itself becomes what it ever was and is, self-consciousness.

As a corollary each becomes the other and every other, “I in them and they in me”, each bears the whole and is necessary to the whole as this whole is necessary to each as what each is. Family relationships, the dependency of generation, the call to marry, reproduce, the absolute impulse of love, in a word, are the sign of this besides being first analogue of all friendship. “Are we not all Christ’s friends?” asks the Zen Buddhist Suzuki, commenting on the Johannine texts. If so, then it was friends who denied and betrayed him and to whom, specifically, the option of forgiveness lay open. Hence the pivotal role Hegel gives to this forgiveness in *The Phenomenology of Mind*. It is in families, again, that it is most frequently called for. Such forgiveness is the root of the historical overcoming of sin, of the idea of it, unless when speaking in jest. This is what in fact evokes the death and resurrection of God once more, in what must ever be a “new theology”, new in its reaffirmation of the old, each jot or tittle.

Note though that it is a function of this maximal solitude, of self in every other, to enable these familial relations and all interchange whatever, an interchange therefore within subjectivity and so not demanding intersubjectivity, the social phenomenon, except as a descriptive term for the above identity, of two which are one, positively or systematically, not abstractly or numerically “neither one nor many” merely, in the negative.

*

God is reason. Where then is God for whom the soul languishes, in tears night and day, where is the lovely dwelling-place, the land of heart’s desire, where abides the tremendous lover, the bridegroom, where the everlasting joy rests upon the faces of the blessed, growing younger by the hour, who leap and run “on the roads to Zion”? Where the thrill of the divine touch, that flesh is too weak to bear, to feel even, where the blow on the back of the neck? Where, we answer, if not in reason? Thus for McTaggart it is the necessary rationality of the world, of reality, that demands the ecstatic heaven of love he outlines. Reason, in perfected self-consciousness, bears all things in maintaining itself simply, in natural as consequent mortification of all other finitely subjective consciousness, right up to death itself as the perfection, the perfect tense, of reason, which is thus its own act. “No man takes my life from me: I lay it down of myself”. This is said not by some suicide but by one who phenomenally speaking was indeed killed, in accordance with the “ideality of the finite” wherein all judgments, as finite, are false, the finite being the home or

place of falsity, in Hegel's judgment, of course therefore, it too, being one-sided.

Precisely this is what we have in the sameness of the Divine Being and Nature in general and human nature in particular: the former is Nature so far as it is not essential being: Nature is divine in its essential Being. But it is in Spirit that we find both abstract aspects affirmed as they truly are, viz. as cancelled and preserved at once; and this way of affirming them cannot be expressed by the judgment, by the soulless word "is", the copula of the judgment- In the same way Nature is nothing outside its essential being [God]; but this nothing itself is all the same; it is absolute abstraction, therefore pure thought or self-centredness, and with its moment of opposition to spiritual unity it is the principle of Evil. (Phenomenology of Mind, p. 777)

Thus it is only in relation to itself that reason demands moderation in all else. Hence it rejoices "up to the hilt" with those who rejoice, weeps in fullest sympathy with those who weep, itself bearing and able to bear the pain. Thinking, as Hegel rounds this off, is blessedness.

Thus, on one side again, though, it follows from our identification, in regard to religion, that "When the death of the mediator is grasped by the self, this means the sublation of his factuality". In St. Paul's words: "Even if we have known Christ after the flesh we know him so no more", but "as Spirit". In a word, "this particular self-existence has become universal self-consciousness" whereby, implicitly, all individual consciousnesses are absorbed and, as absorbed, fulfilled, having become thus what they are essentially. The reverse or phenomenal side of this is the human effort involved. Yet, "You would not seek me if you had not already found me", thus proving the truth of the Dominical affirmation, which otherwise would be an exaggeration: "Seek and you shall find".

The being of the or "this" individual human being passes over into His *having been*. Consciousness, for which God is thus sensuously present, ceases to see Him, to hear Him: it *has* seen Him, it *has* heard Him. And it is because it only *has* seen and heard Him, that it first becomes itself spiritual consciousness. (*Ibid.* p.762)

Hegel here simply applies his earlier negative analysis of sense-perception, in what might be seen as acknowledgement of the perfection of the perfect tense, to this ultimate reach of spirit. Mindful of these and related considerations we should not be surprised to find Hegel writing as follows:

The death of the mediator is death not merely of his natural aspect, of his particular self-existence; what dies is not merely the outer encasement, which, being stripped of essential Being, is eo ipso dead, but also the abstraction of the Divine Being. For the mediator, as long as his death has not yet accomplished the reconciliation, is something one-sided, which takes as essential Being the simple abstract element of thought, not concrete reality. (p.781)

Specific talk of God is mostly “the simple abstract element of thought”, not concrete reality, though that is itself also thought, but concretely, as self-consciousness. Divine Being “not yet affirmed as a self”, indeed as the entirety of selfhood, is as much pictorial as it is abstract. We do not have God so long as we thus talk of him, at a fictitious distance as it were. Hence we have to lose him, this picture, to find him, in himself, as being taken up into him at where we now see we were all the time, seeking what had found us from the beginning. This is the “dark knowledge” in the “loss of Substance... over against consciousness”. Substance itself is “the pure subjectivity” and no object. This is spiritualization, in “universal self-consciousness”. Thus: “spirit is Spirit knowing its own self”, inseparable from the knowing. What “is absolutely in opposition recognises itself as the same as its opposite”.

The process, it here transpires, is interior. That is what it means to say that God is reason, while all that is seen is finite, passing and thus “ideal” only, not concrete. Mind, it appears, needs nothing. This is interiority in the one realising this. J.-N. Grou SJ, taking refuge in England from the frenzied Robespierrean persecutions, wrote a book called *A Manual for Interior Souls*, this being a stock expression for French spirituality particularly. It represents the sense in which the prayerful and/or philosophical man is indeed not “cut off” from the world, since he himself has indeed cut off the miasma called “the world”, rather. The world feels this at the same time as it sees that such a person is more effective than anyone else at solving the world’s problems, fool though he be reckoned and perhaps has become. In this sense the inside, the interior, is outside, there being no other candidate.